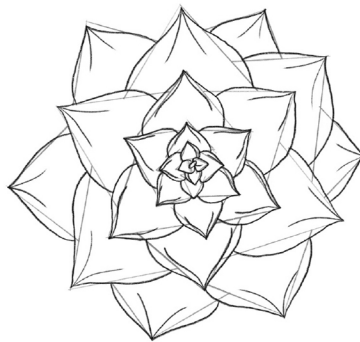


DRAW LIKE  
AN ARTIST

# 100 FLOWERS AND PLANTS

STEP-BY-STEP REALISTIC LINE DRAWING



A SOURCEBOOK FOR ASPIRING ARTISTS AND DESIGNERS

MELISSA WASHBURN



DRAW LIKE AN ARTIST

# **100 FLOWERS AND PLANTS**



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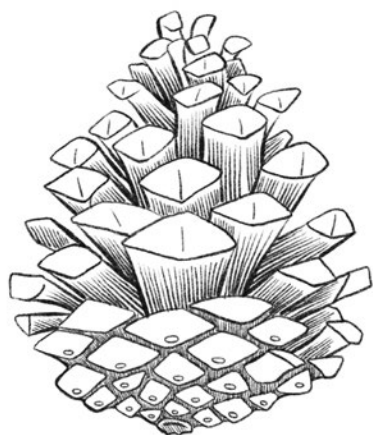
Step-by-Step Realistic Line Drawing

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# INTRODUCTION

My fascination with the natural world started in my childhood in the Adirondack region of upstate New York. I've always needed to know the name, characteristics, and life cycle of the plants, insects, birds, and animals around me, so it seemed natural (no pun intended) that these subjects would become a major theme of my work as an artist and illustrator.

The best teacher for drawing plants and flowers is nature itself. While plants and flowers can seem very tricky and complex at first, careful observation will show that, for the most part, they are composed of simpler shapes repeated in a few common patterns. Spirals, radials, and other symmetrical arrangements are evident everywhere you look, from the radiating pattern of daisy petals and the spiral arrangements of succulent leaves to the opposing leaf pairs of a milkweed plant. Knowing what to look for will help you master the drawing of plants.

For example, flowers such as daisies have petals that are all the same shape while irises and orchids have an arrangement of pairs or triads of differently shaped petals. Honey-suckle and trumpet vine have long, tube-like blossoms made of fused petals. Aside from the shapes and symmetry of stems, leaves, and flowers, it is also important to note the pattern of the veins on leaves, as there are several different arrangements depending on the type of plant. Some veins all radiate out from a central point at the base of the leaf, some branch alternately from a central vein, and some are paired symmetrically moving from the base

to the tip of the leaf. The veins are generally either slightly lighter or slightly darker than the leaf itself.

I've organized the exercises in this book not by scientific classification but rather by the more commonly recognized types and shapes that a general audience will be familiar with. Scientific botanical illustration follows a more specific set of conventions and level of detail, and there are a number of excellent references available on the subject for the interested student.

This book is divided into three main sections: flowers and flowering plants; vines, leaves, and trees; and other plants (including succulents, herbs, and grasses). You will probably find that as you get to know how certain plants are constructed, those forms will apply to other species with similar forms (for example, the basic parts of a daisy are very similar to the basic parts of a black-eyed Susan or echinacea/cone flower blossom). You'll also find that, like snowflakes, no two flowers or leaves are identical. It's the little flaws, quirks, and differences that give depictions of plant life their character and realism.

Once you understand the general symmetry and basic shapes found in common plants and flowers, you can begin working with them in perspective, in multiples, and as elements in larger compositions. I hope that this book will introduce you to the basics and get you more comfortable and familiar with some of the plant life we see all around us.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

There are many tools, media, and styles in which to draw flowers and plants. This book uses some techniques I have learned over the years and will show you the methods I have found most useful for understanding the basics of drawing realistically. The figures and steps can be copied directly to achieve a finished drawing, and the process and method can be used for drawing many other subjects, whether plants, animals, or anything else.

## Suggested Materials

- Graphite pencil: At a minimum, you should have a standard HB pencil, but harder pencils (2H, 4H, etc.) are useful for making lighter lines and underdrawing, while softer pencils (2-6B) are helpful for more dramatic lines and shading.
- Felt tip pens or brush pens
- Smooth paper, at least 80 lb
- Eraser: I recommend a kneaded eraser, which erases very cleanly without smudging and doesn't leave "crumbs" on your paper.

## Basic Drawing Process

Begin the drawing with your harder pencil so your lines will be light and easy to erase. Once you are satisfied with your shapes and basic contour, you can go over the drawing with your soft pencil or drawing pens. You can then erase your lighter pencil lines for a clean, finished drawing.

## Negative Space

In order to draw an accurate contour line for complex leaves and petals, sometimes it is more helpful to look at what *isn't* there than what is. This is called "drawing the negative space." In the example of the maple leaf below, start by drawing elongated diamond shapes for the segments of the leaf. Then, to accurately describe the leaf margin or edge, you'll subtract areas to follow the contour of the leaf edge.

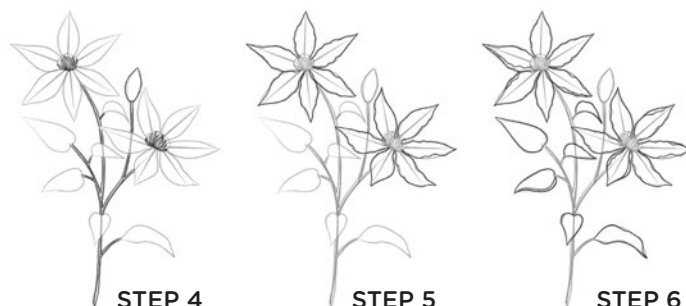
It is often easiest to start with a simpler shape (triangle, diamond, teardrop) and then subtract the negative space to arrive at the correct form for the plant part you are drawing.



## Constructing the Image

Once you establish the basic shapes and symmetry of the flower or plant, you can start to establish the more detailed contours of the leaves, petals, and other parts. The middle steps (generally steps 3 and 4 or 4 through 6) are the construction steps. In this stage of the drawing, you are establishing the three-dimensional quality of the plant.

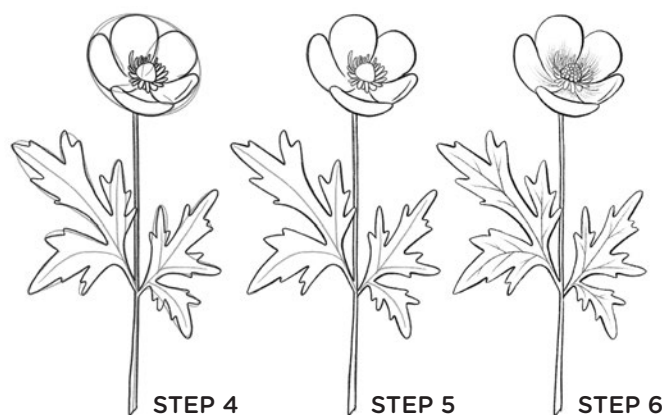
In the clematis example below, step 4 begins to show the proper position and angles of the leaves and petals. The ruffled edges of the petals and the parts of the center of the flower are articulated in steps 5 and 6.



## Adding Details and Cleanup

Final lines and small details come last. Here you add things like patterns and markings, veins and creases, and a little bit of shading. Once you're happy with your work, go over your contour lines with a pen and add more detail. Finally, erase your pencil lines. In step 4 of the buttercup drawing here, you can still see the light pencil lines of the general shapes we started with. In step 5, I begin to erase those lines, and in the finished drawing in step 6, you can see the final shading, flower detail, and leaf veins added.

If you are new to drawing plants, you can copy the steps in this book exactly. As you become more advanced in your drawing practice, you can apply these steps and techniques to other plants you observe and to entirely different subjects.



## TIPS FOR BETTER LINE CONTROL

All of the drawings in this book are line drawings. Even though we are only using lines to create realistic flowers and plants, with good line control your drawings can be more polished and life-like. Here are some tips and tricks to make your lines smoother and more controlled.

### **TIP #1: DRAW WITH MORE THAN JUST YOUR HAND AND WRIST**

Beginners tend to grip their pencil very tightly and move just the hand/wrist. Drawing is not at all like writing. Practice loosening the grip on your pencil and moving your entire arm when you

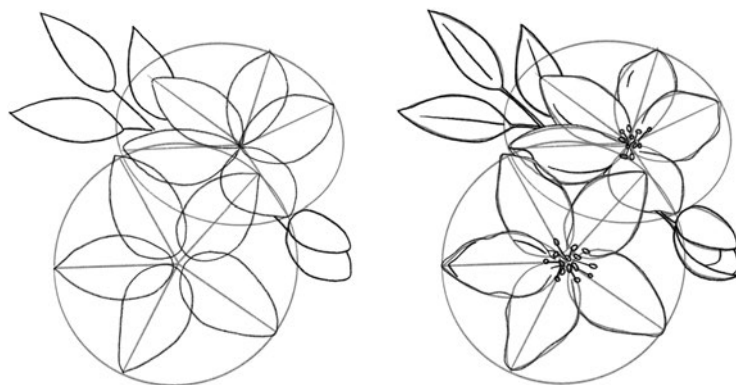
draw. You'll find that your lines become smoother and more consistent. Turn your paper if you need to, pulling *down* the page to create a smooth line. It's much easier to pull your lines down than to push them up the page. Drawing large will also help—use a 14" × 17" (36 × 43 cm) or larger sheet if you can.

## EXERCISE

Using your favorite drawing tool, draw on a large piece of paper or chalkboard. Just practice getting smooth lines by drawing large, simple shapes. Draw circles, ovals, triangles, created in one long, large stroke moving from your shoulder. This is a good warm-up exercise before you begin drawing each day.

## TIP #2: ALWAYS “DRAW THROUGH”

When drawing shapes for leaves and petals, get in the habit of drawing the complete form, even if it overlaps or will be hidden by another part of the plant or flower. This ensures that you will draw the full shape accurately and not accidentally distort it by trying to fit it around the other forms.



In this example from page 33, the complete petal shapes are shown overlapping, even though some of the petals on the top blossom will be hidden behind the front/bottom blossom in the finished drawing. Understanding the placement of the parts you can't see will give a more realistic, three-dimensional look to your work.

## TIP #3: VARY THE LINE THICKNESS

Varying the thickness of the line as you draw will immediately make your drawing look more interesting and dynamic. As suggested on page 7, a softer pencil (or a softer felt tip ink pen or brush pen) will allow you to easily change your line weight with slight pressure changes as you draw.

## EXERCISE

On a large sheet of paper, draw with a felt tip or brush pen. Make a series of lines, experimenting with varying the line thickness using more or less pressure on the same line as you draw. Also experiment with holding your drawing tool at a different angle to see how it affects the thickness and quality of the line. Try drawing the lines more slowly or more quickly and see what effect this has on the line quality as well.

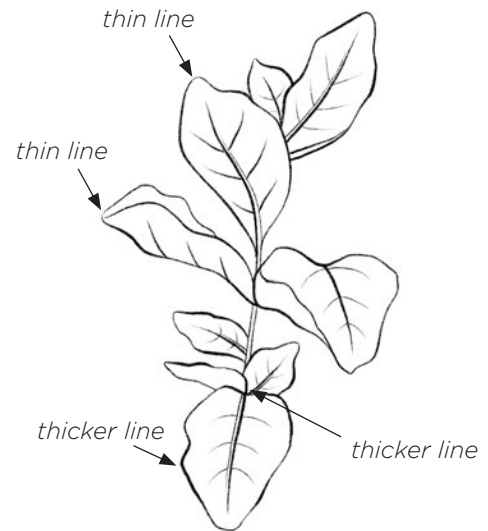


**TIP #4: USE LINE WEIGHT TO SUGGEST LIGHT AND SHADOW**

The thickness of your line can suggest light and shadow in a drawing. Thin lines will make a surface seem more well lit while a thicker line will suggest contrast and shadow. This will also add drama to your drawing.

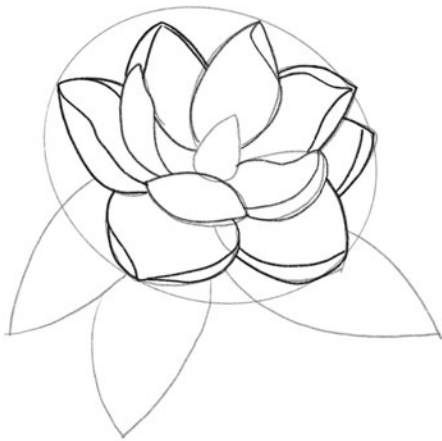
**EXERCISE**

Draw simple household objects like fruit or a cup. Note the direction from which the light is coming; use thinner lines on the edges that face the light source and thicker lines on the edges that are furthest away from the light. Once you are comfortable using this technique for simpler objects, you can do the same with more complex subjects such as leaves or flowers.

**TIP #5: SHADING**

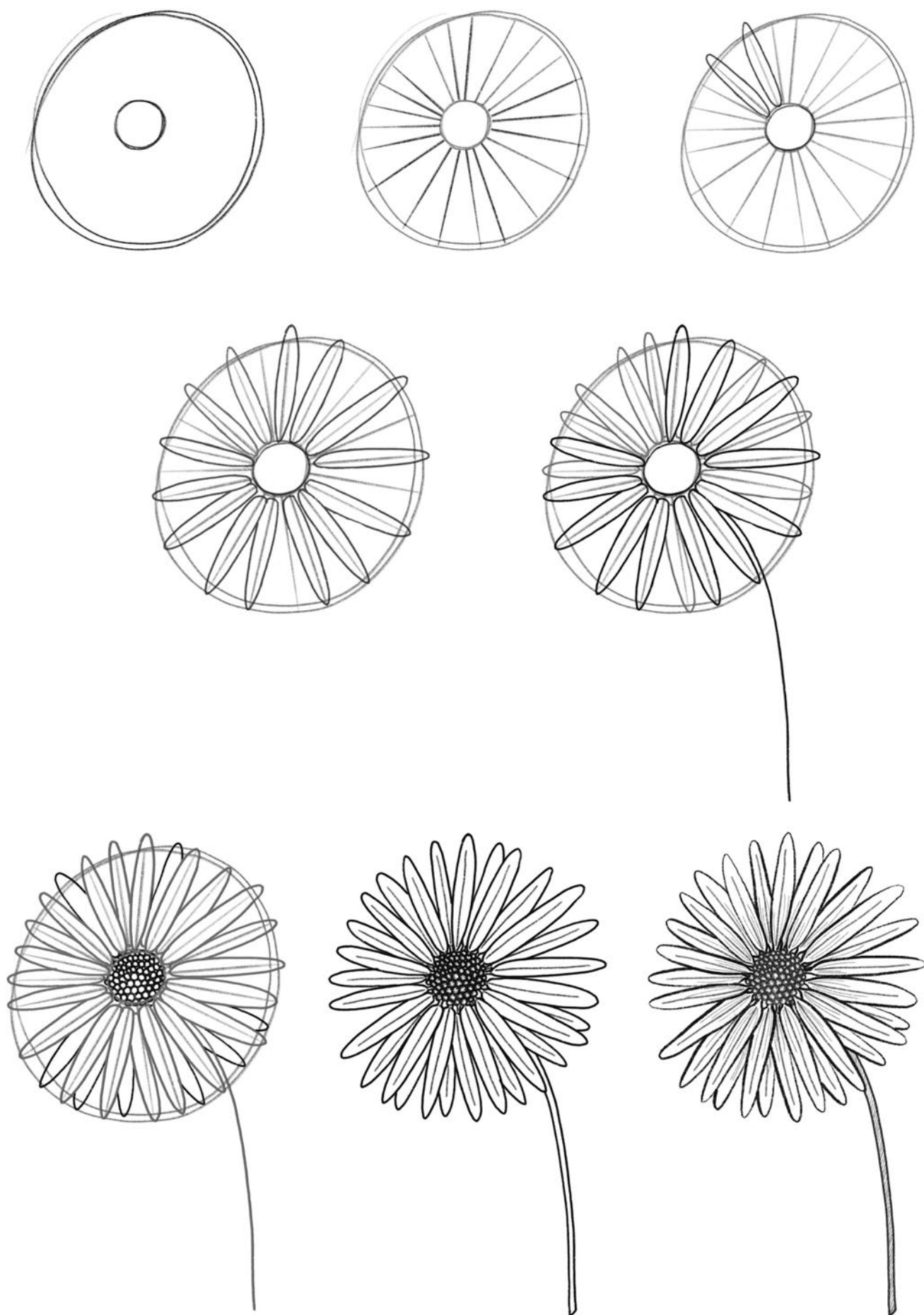
In addition to using thick and thin lines to suggest light and shadow, you can also use a couple of techniques in your line drawing to create more dramatic shading and shadows. In this case, I use “shading” to mean areas that are inherently darker than others, not necessarily due to cast shadows.

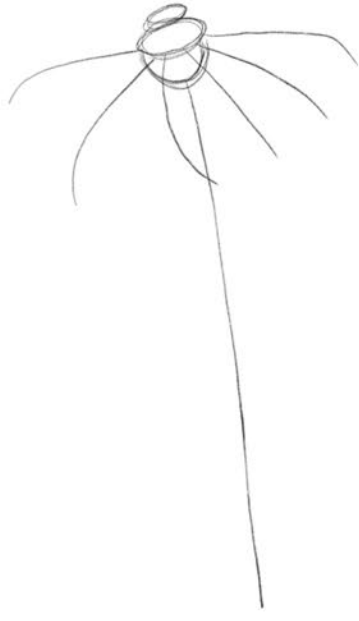
For plants and flowers, parallel lines or lines radiating out from the center of a leaf or flower can be used to show deepening shadows as you go toward the center of the plant. Lines drawn closer together will create a darker area; lines drawn further apart will create more subtle shading. You can also use the side of your pencil to quickly shade or fill in an area evenly. The magnolia blossom below features both techniques: Radiating lines show the shading on the petals deepening toward the center of the flower, and shading with the side of the pencil is used for the leaves, which are of a darker color than the petals.

**EXERCISE**

Create a simple still life from a few simple objects and overlap one object in front of the other. First use the side of your pencil to create smooth shading on the darkest object(s). Then observe where the darkest parts of the shadows are and use parallel lines very close together to shade those areas. Use lines drawn a little farther apart to shade areas that are not quite as dark. Layering these techniques together will allow you to describe both the relative colors of objects just in black and white as well as capturing the light and shadow falling on the objects.





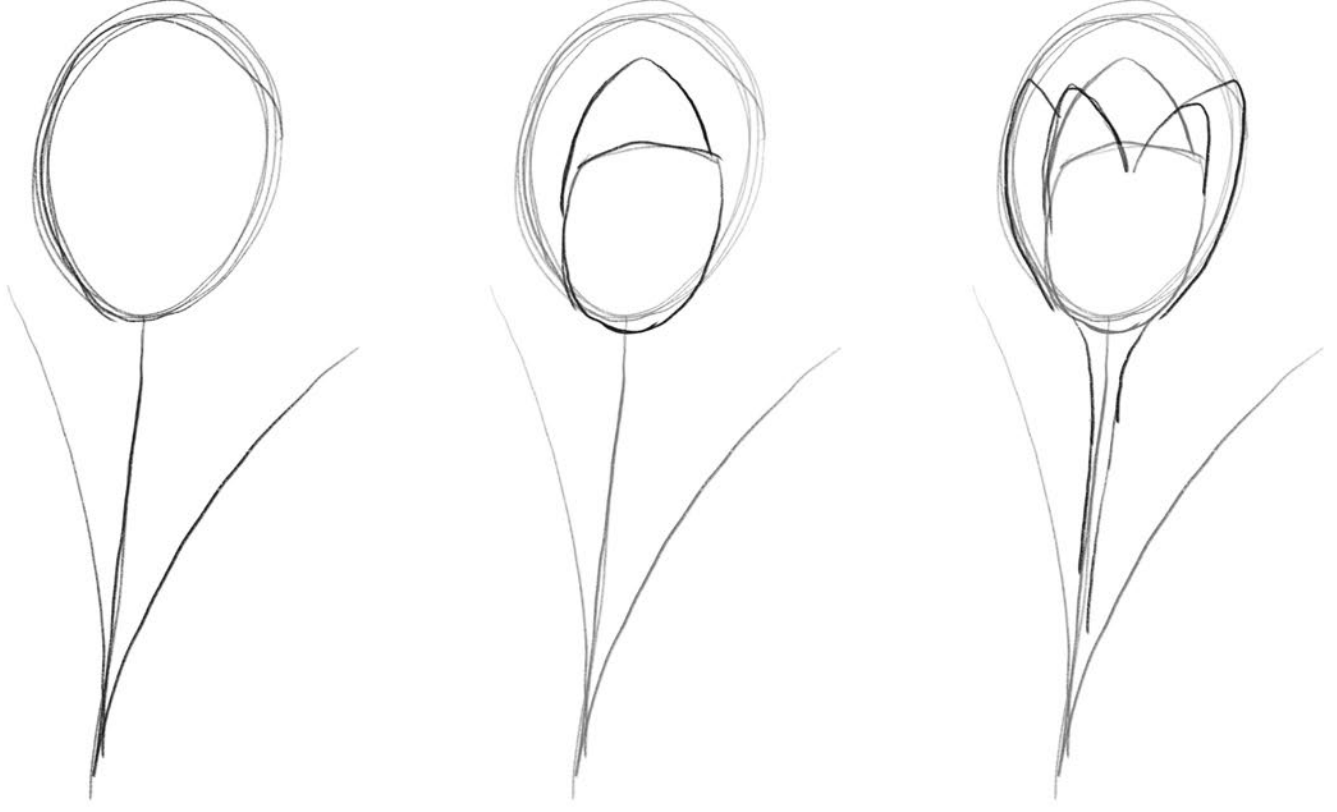


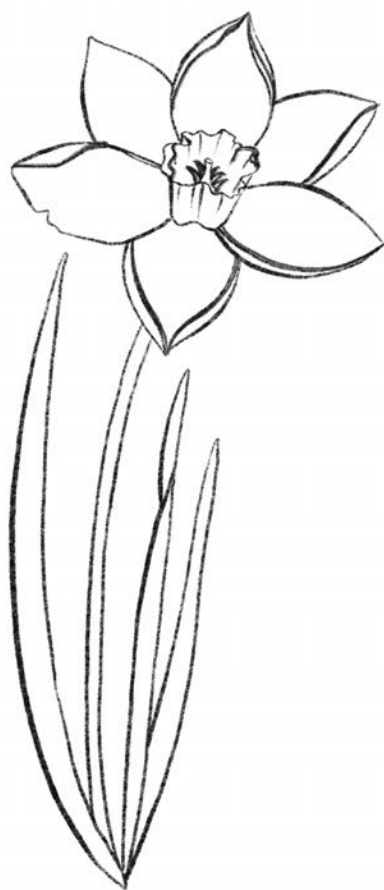
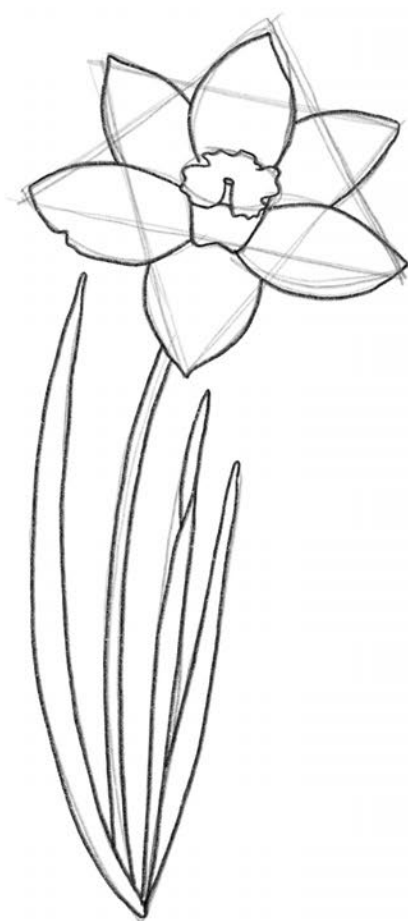
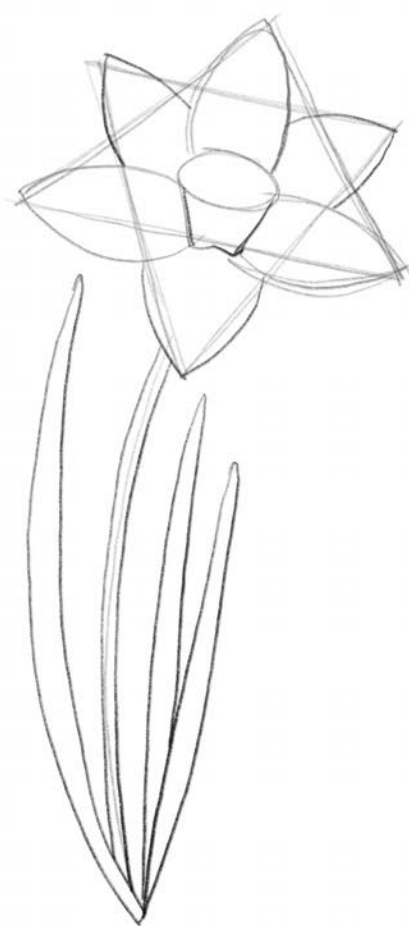
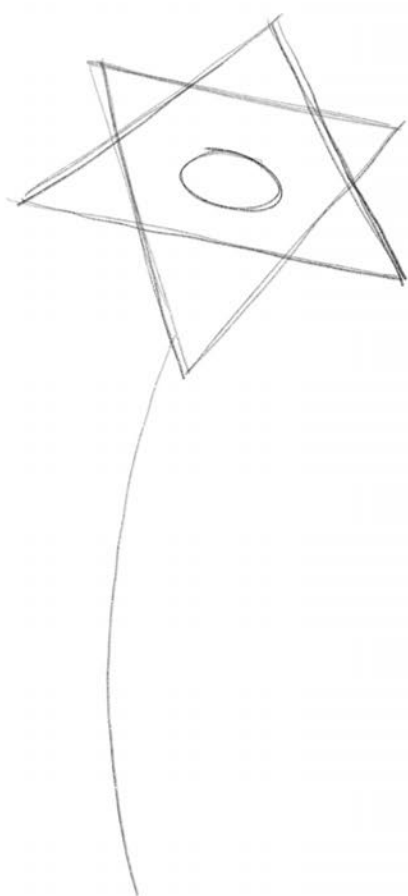


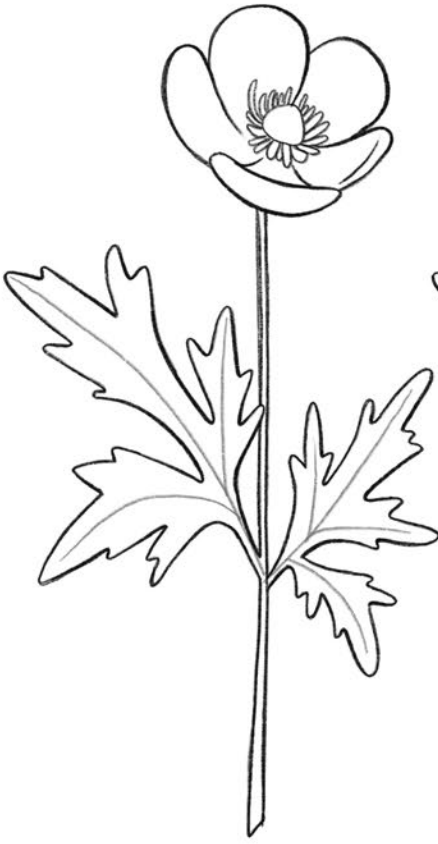
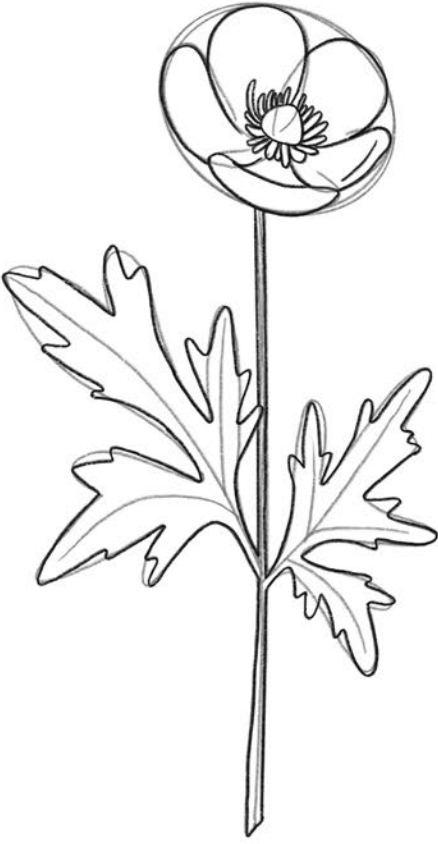
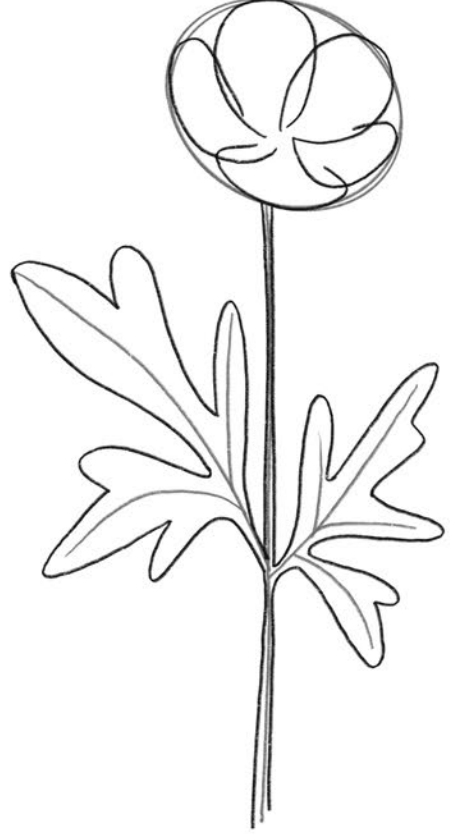
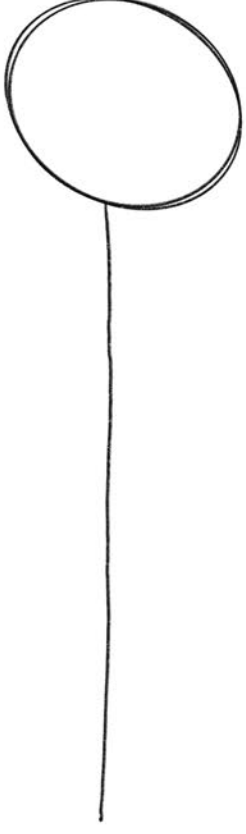






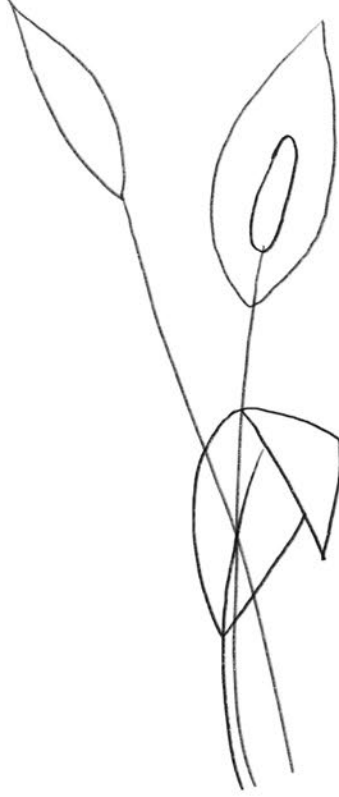
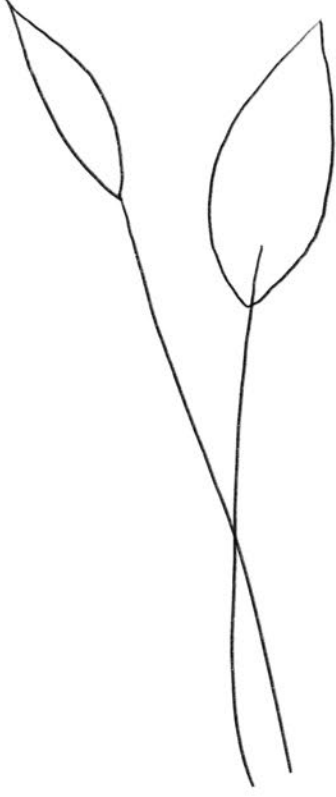


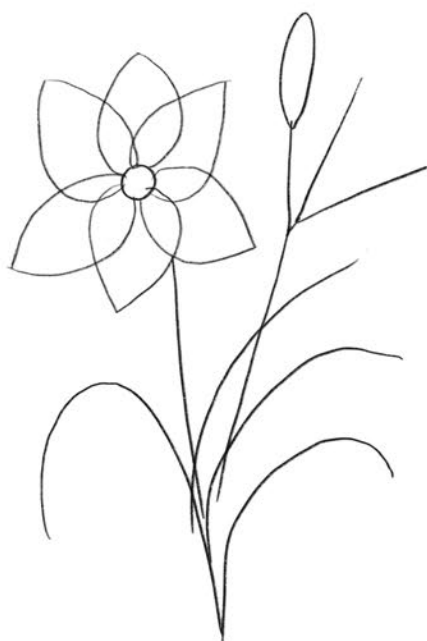
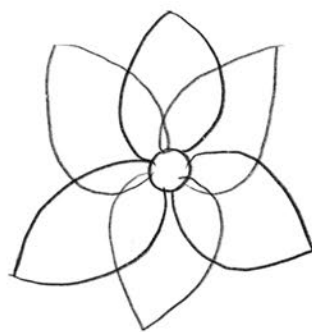
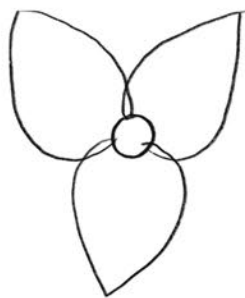


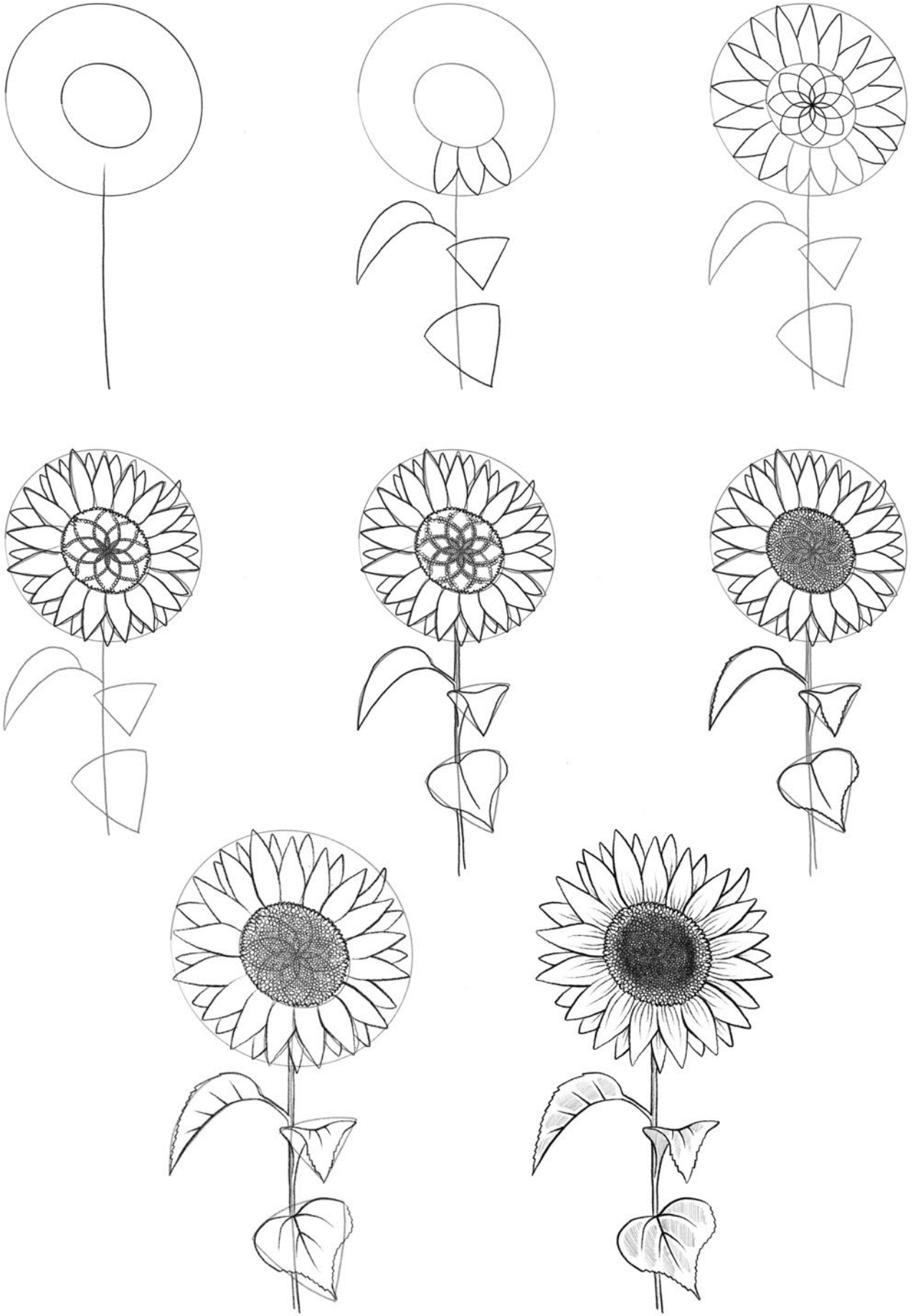




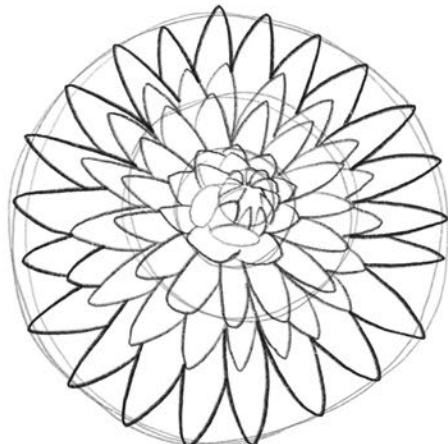
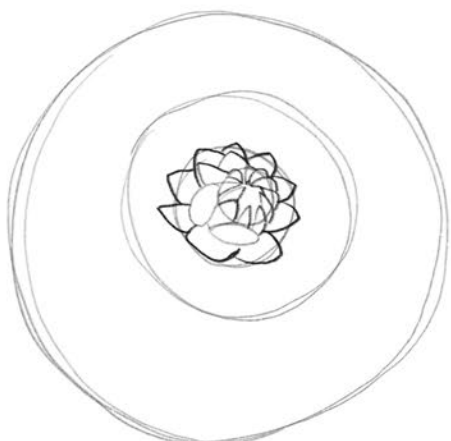
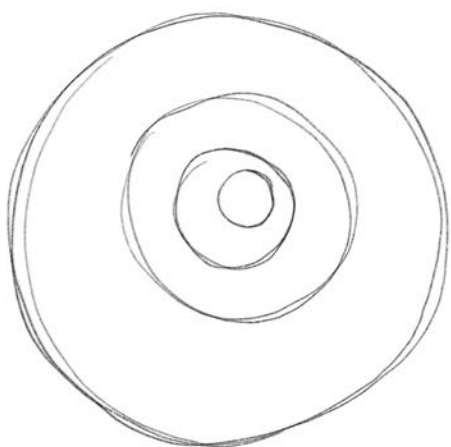


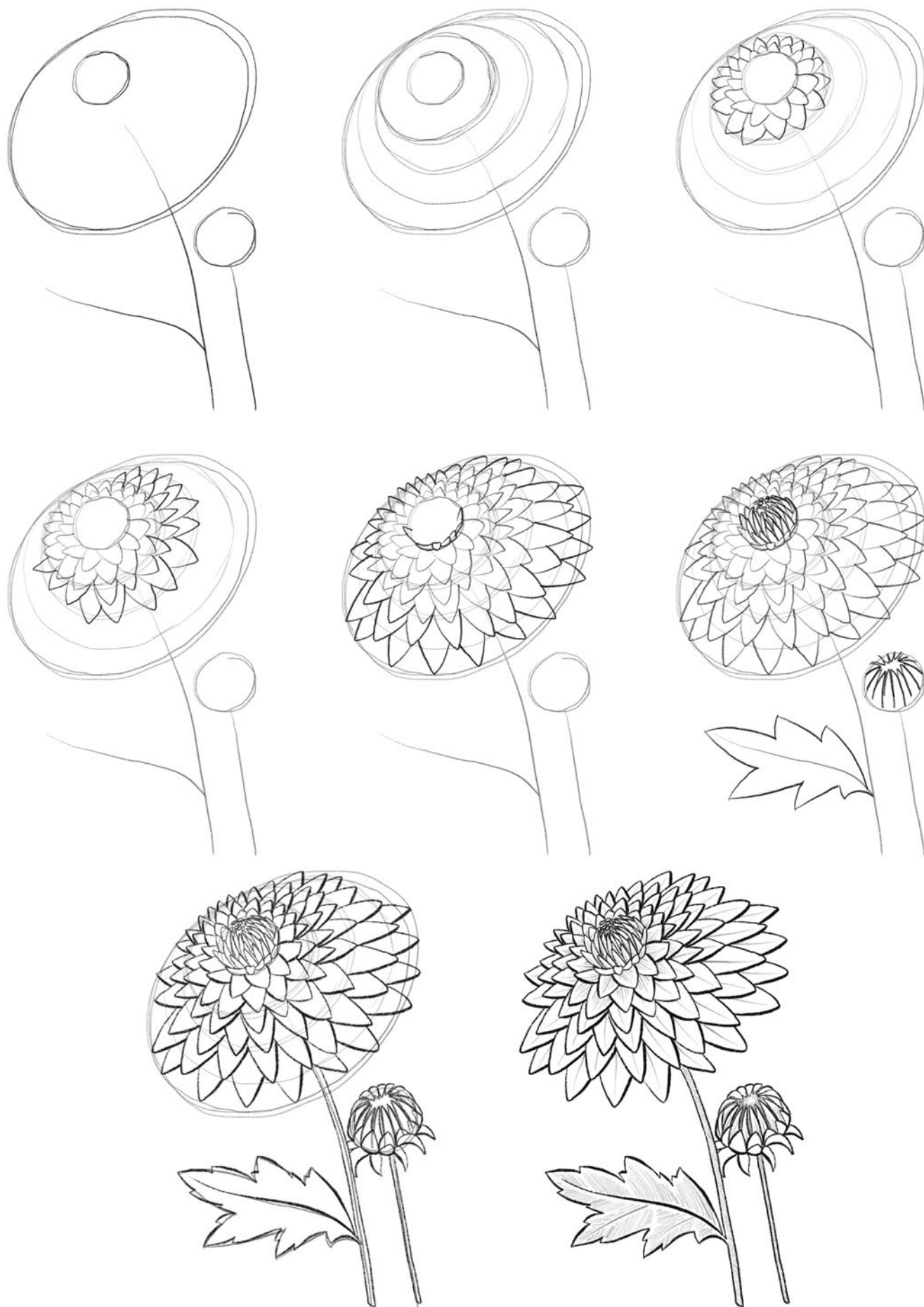


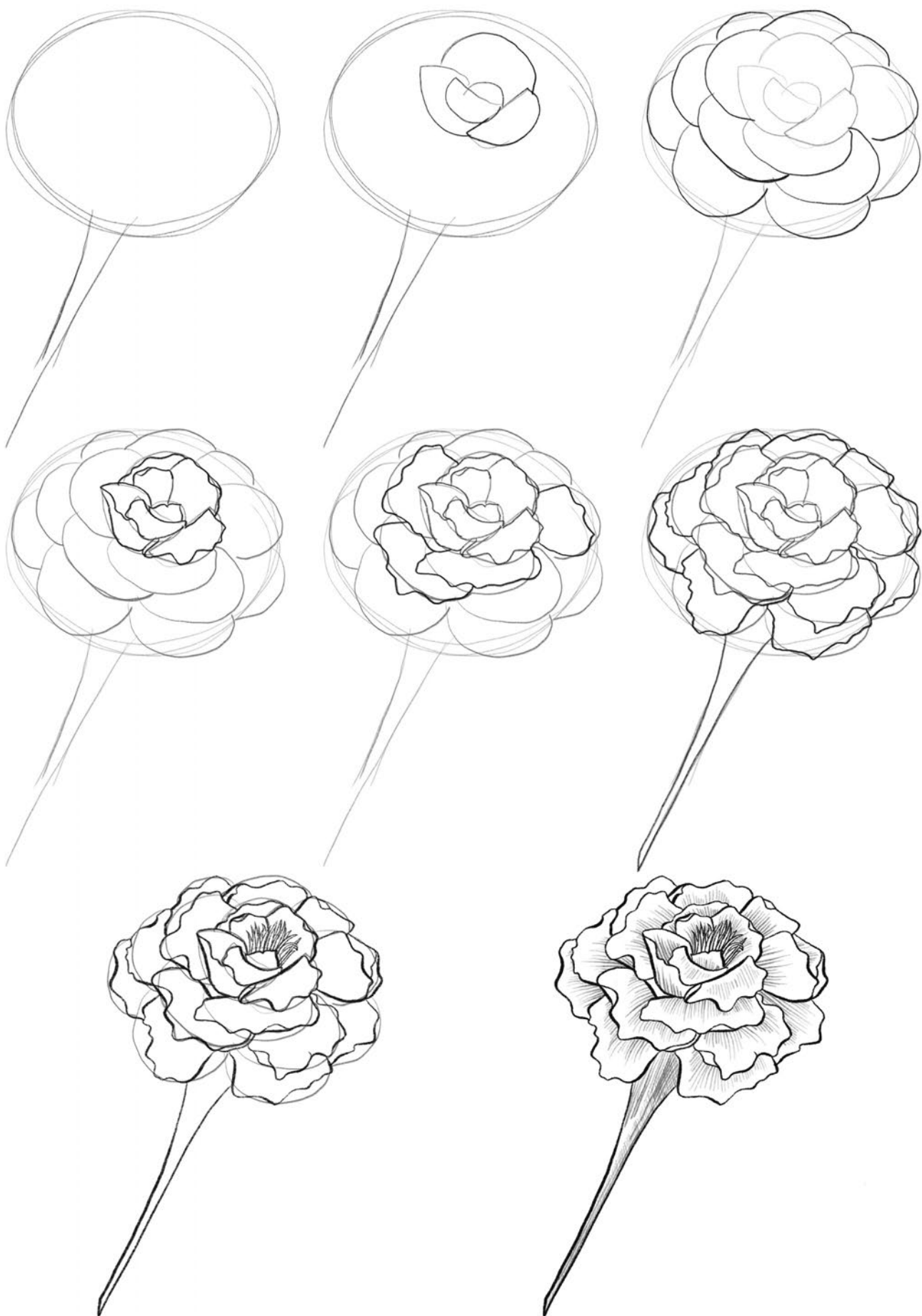








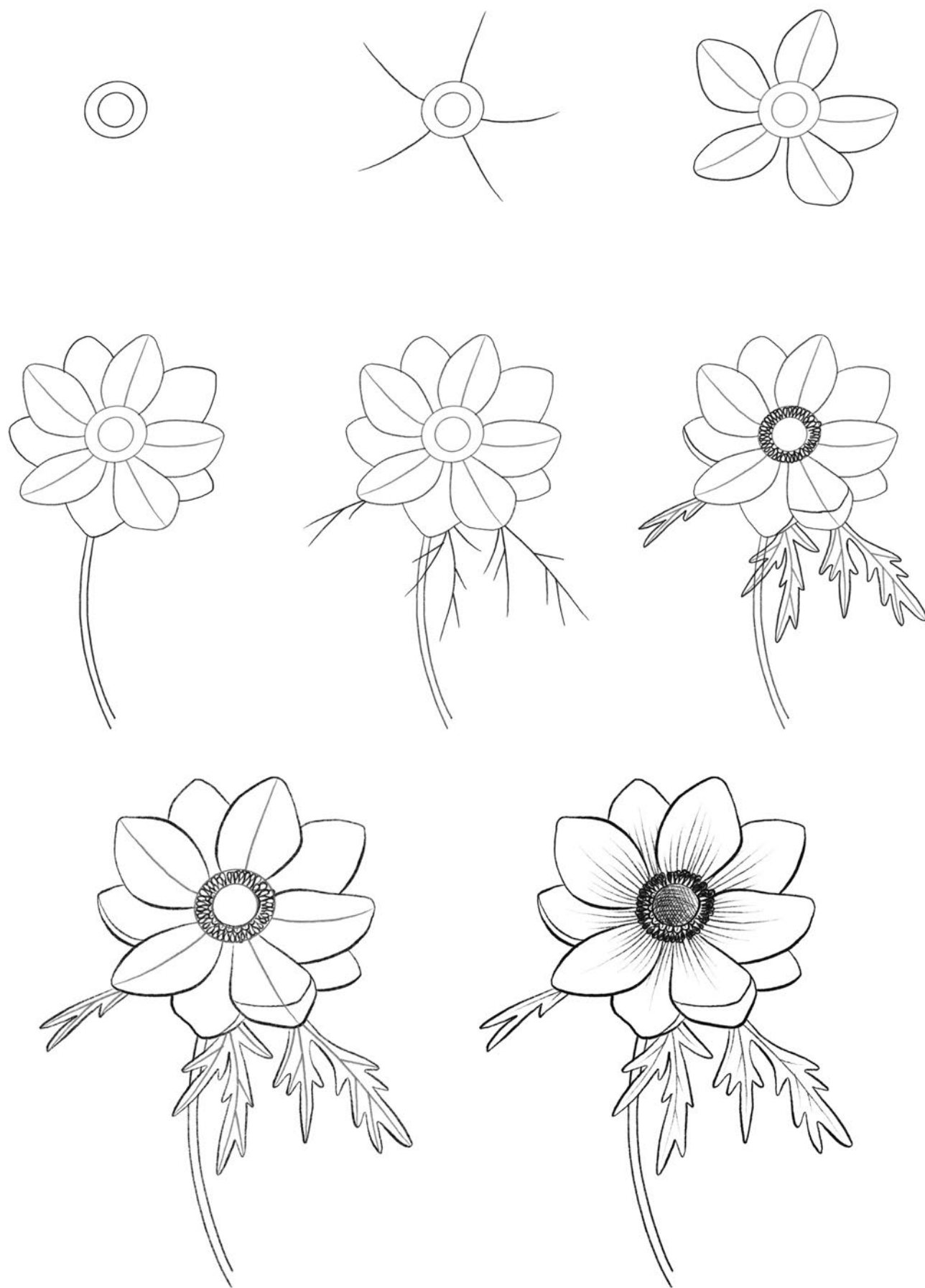


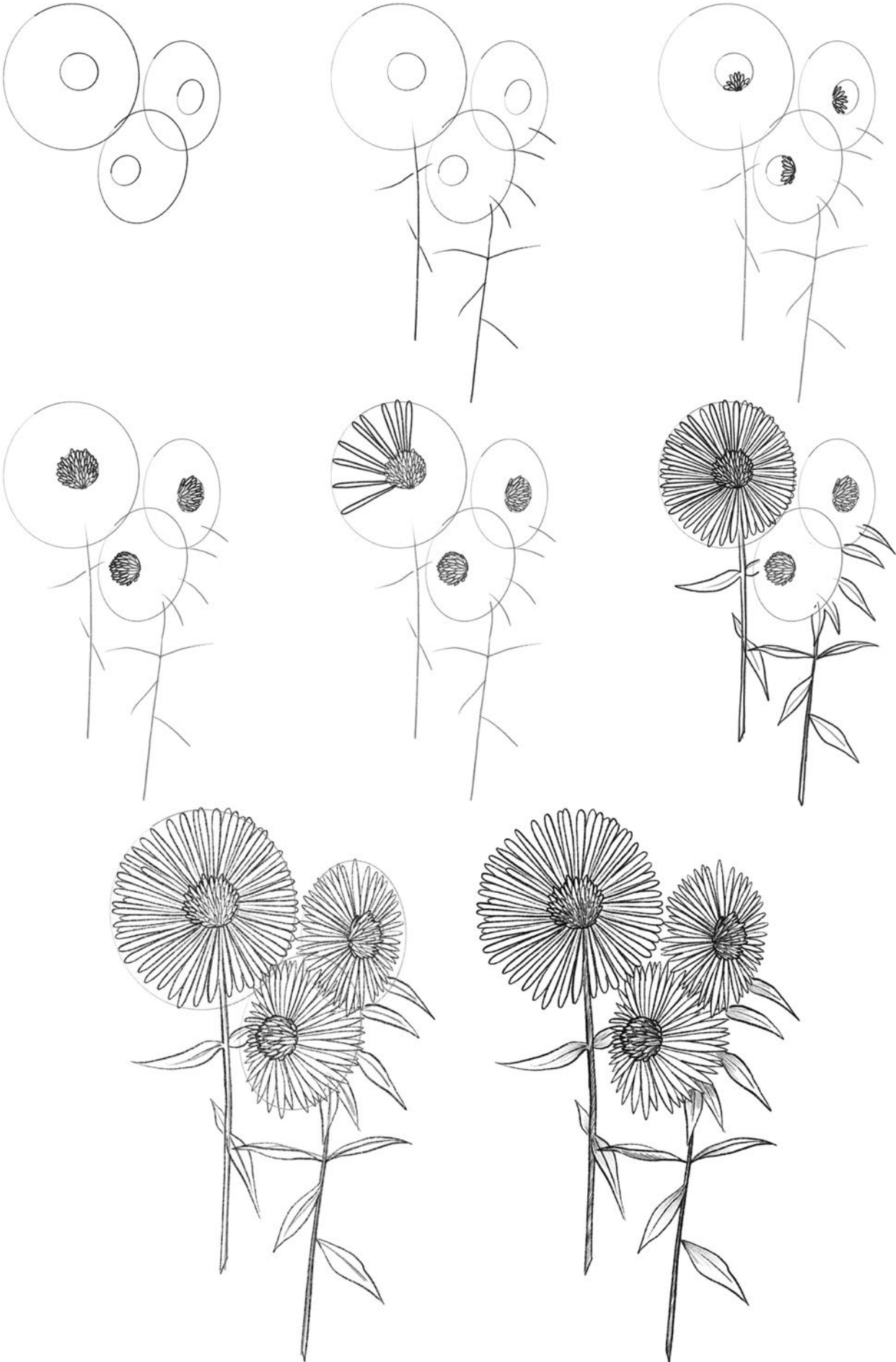


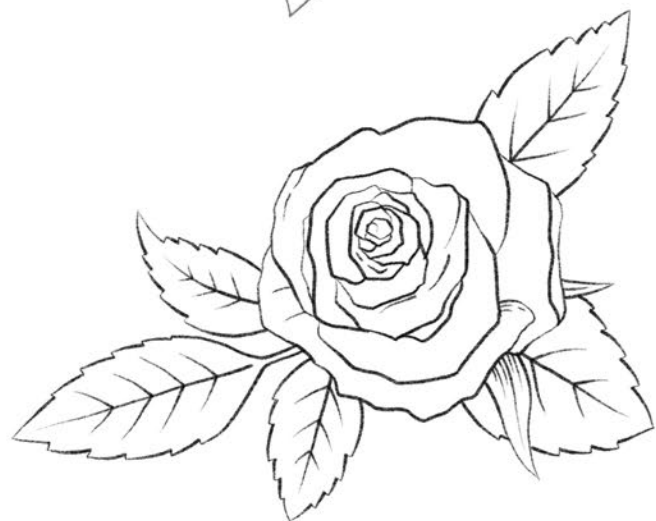
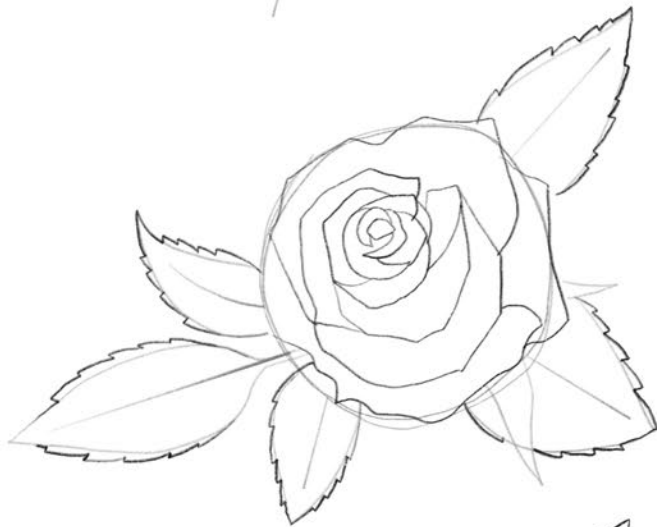
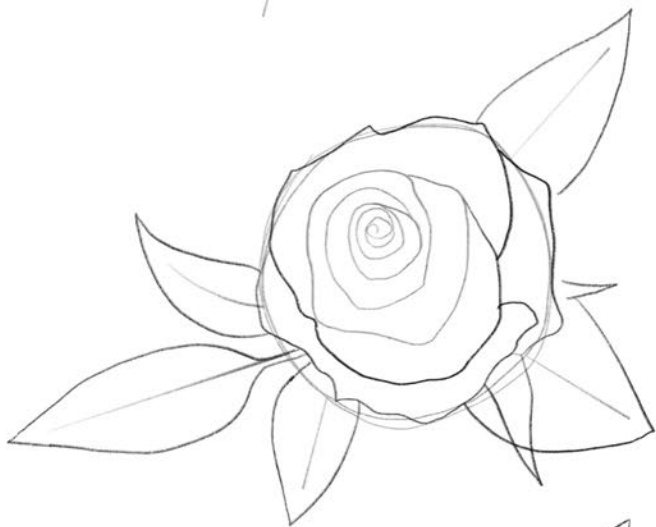
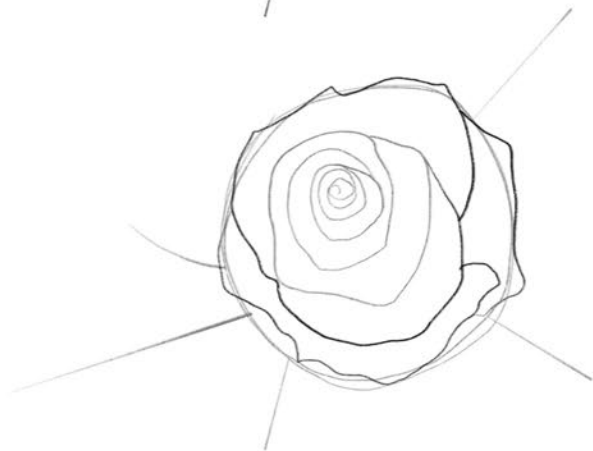
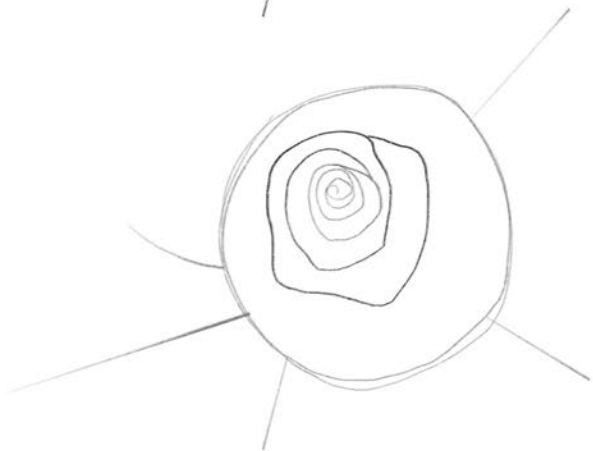
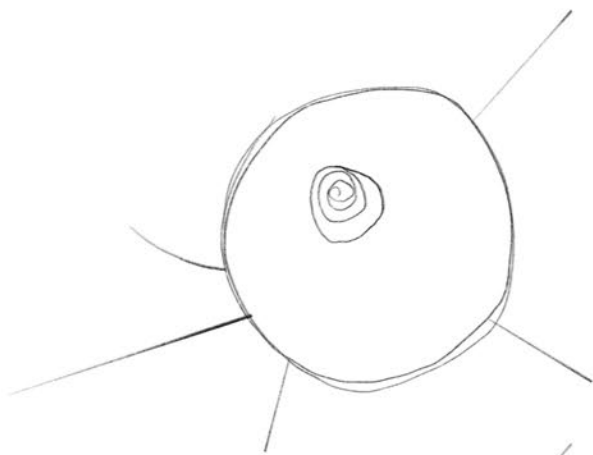
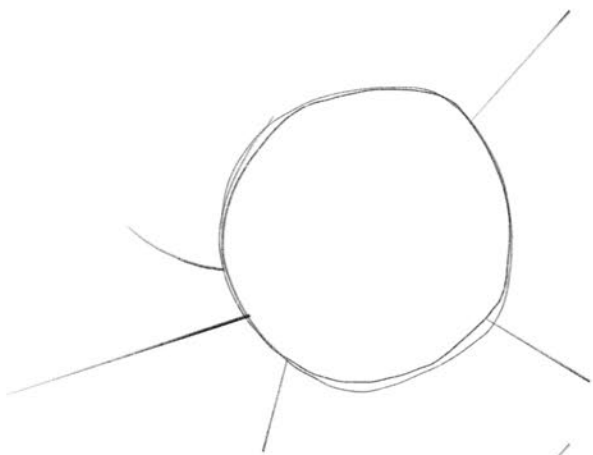


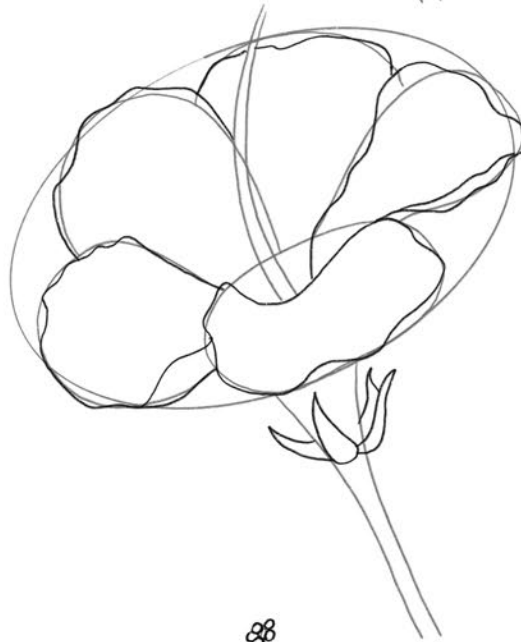
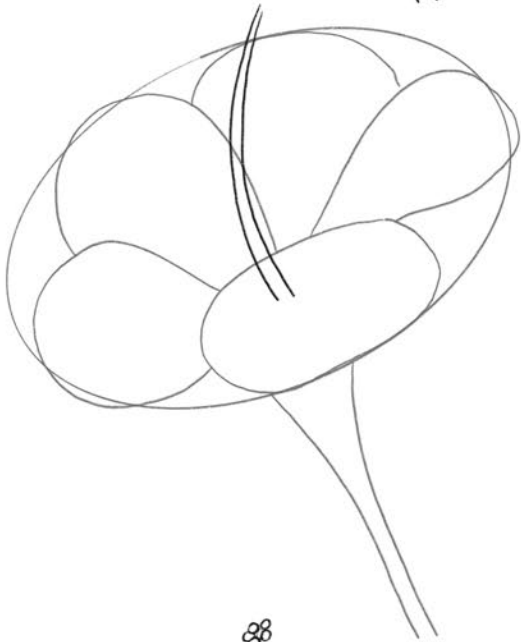
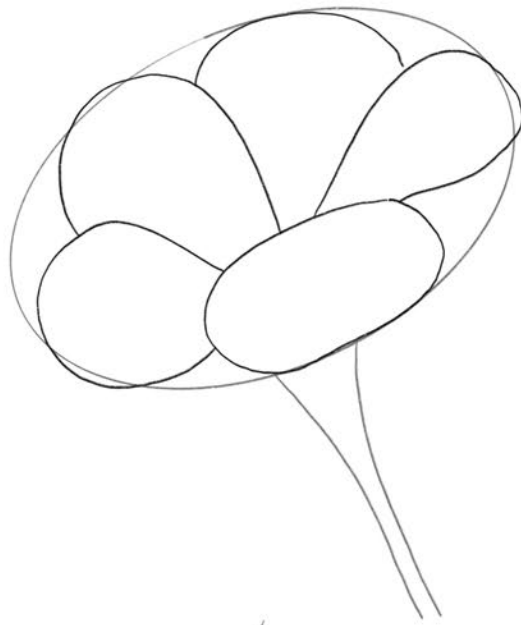
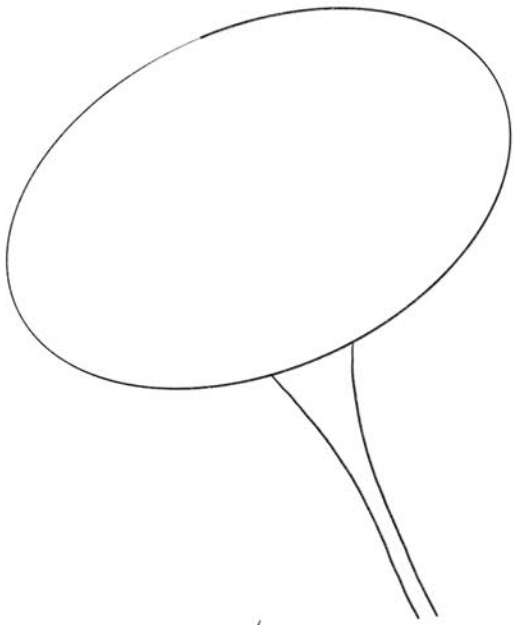








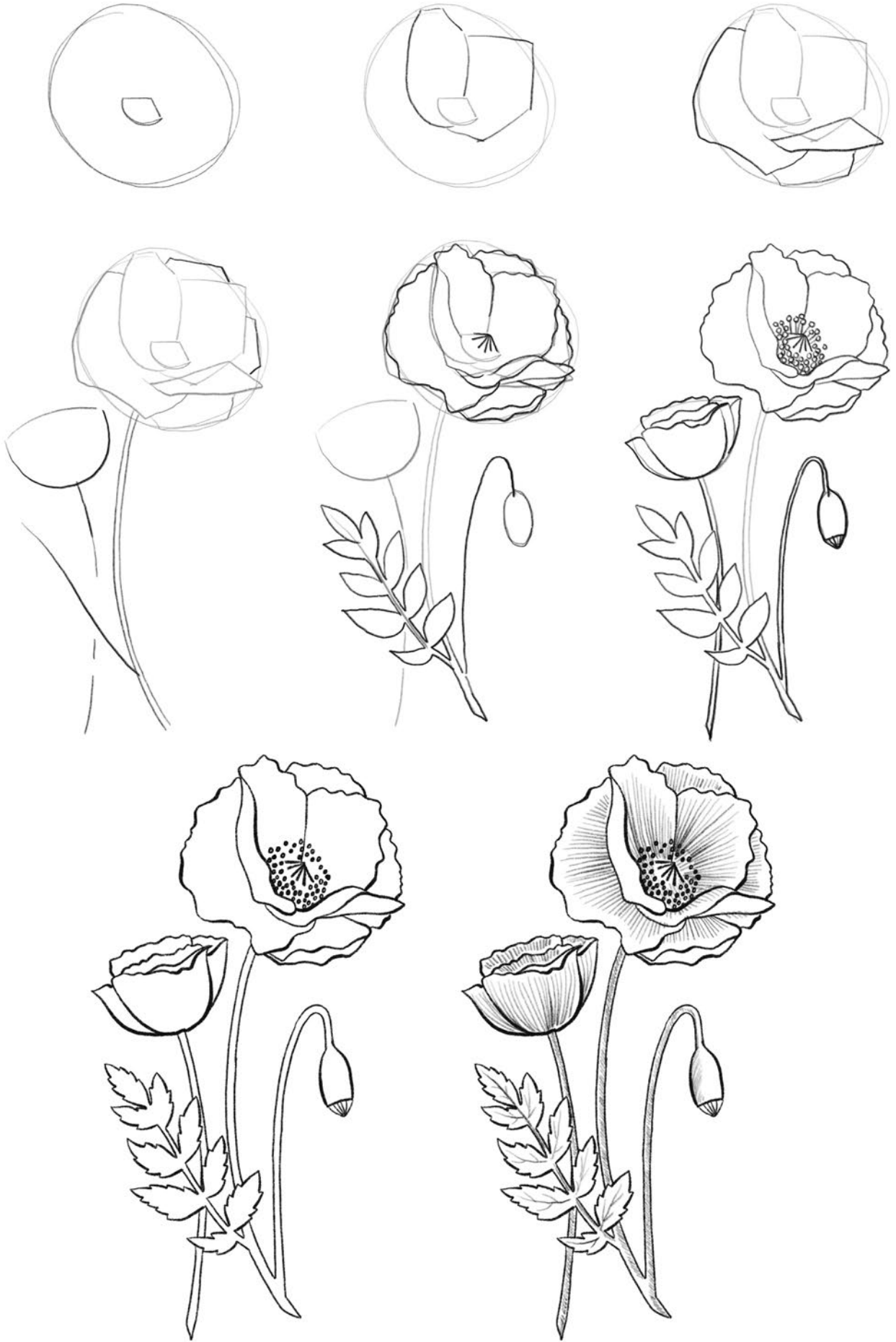


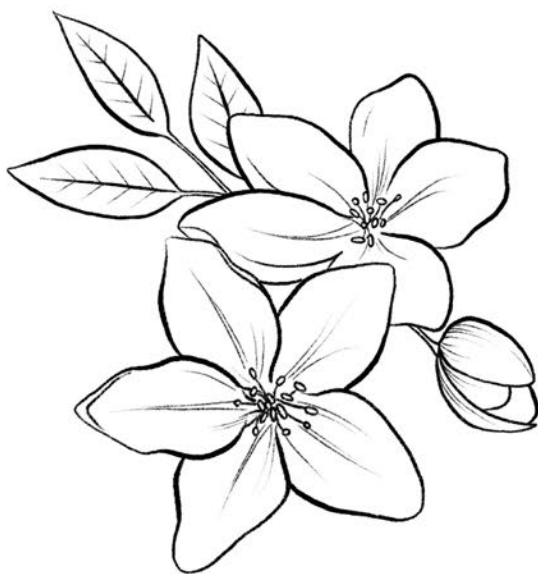
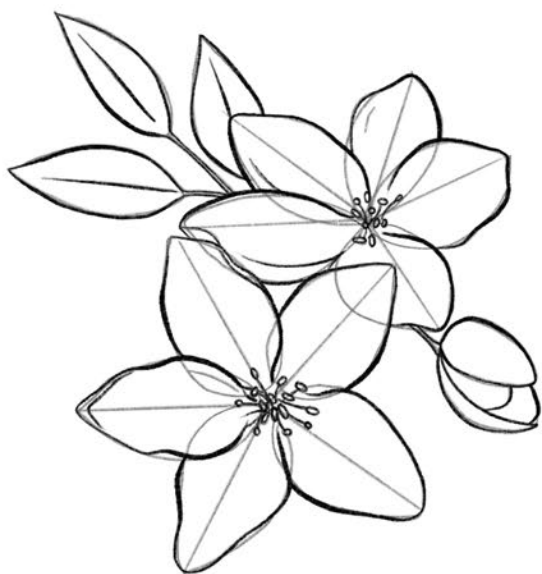
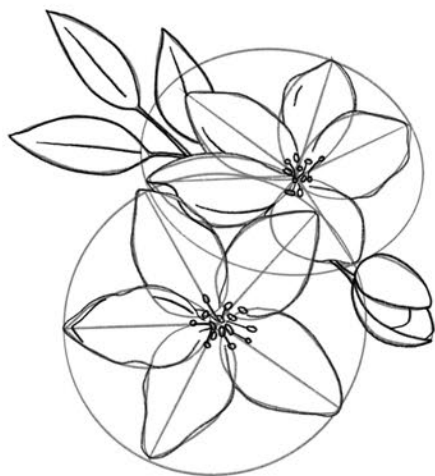
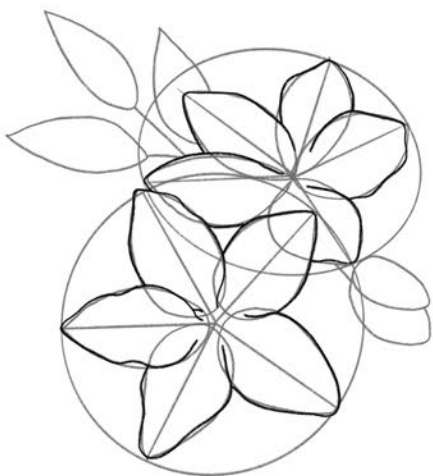
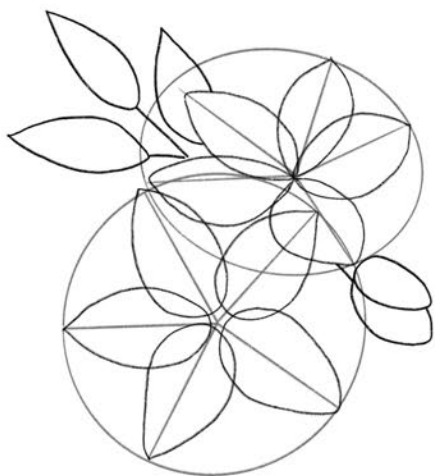
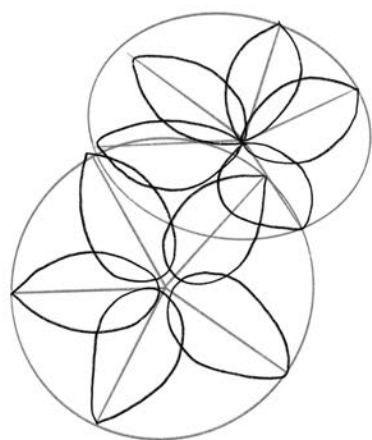
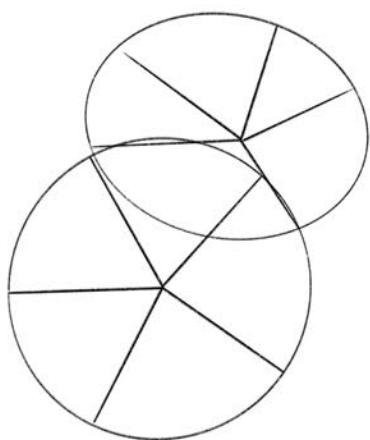
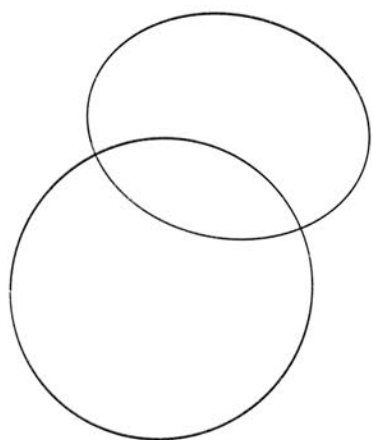


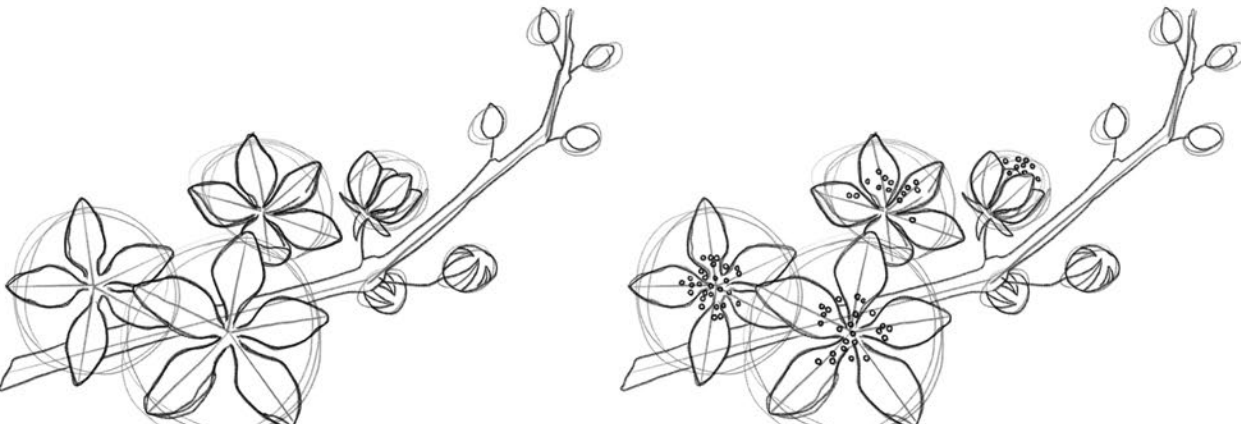
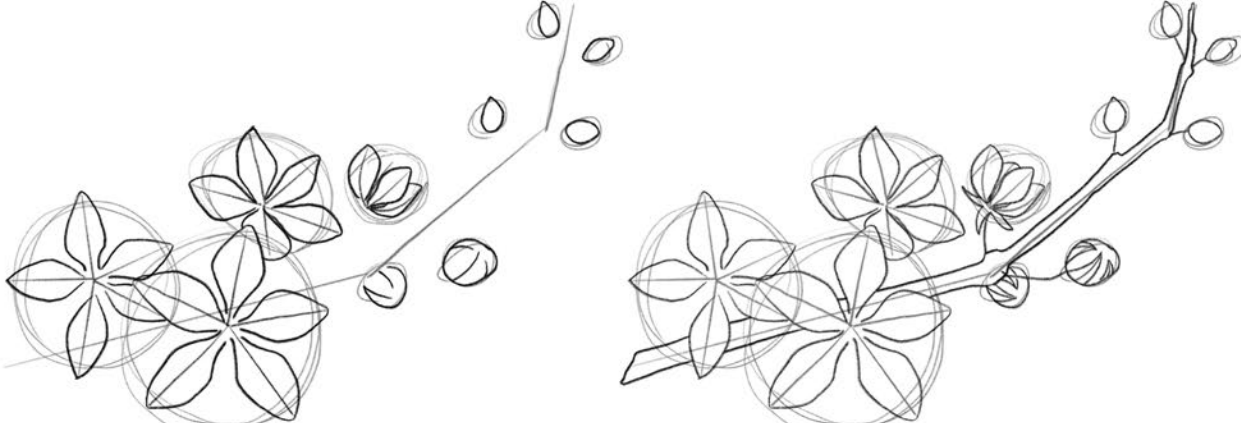
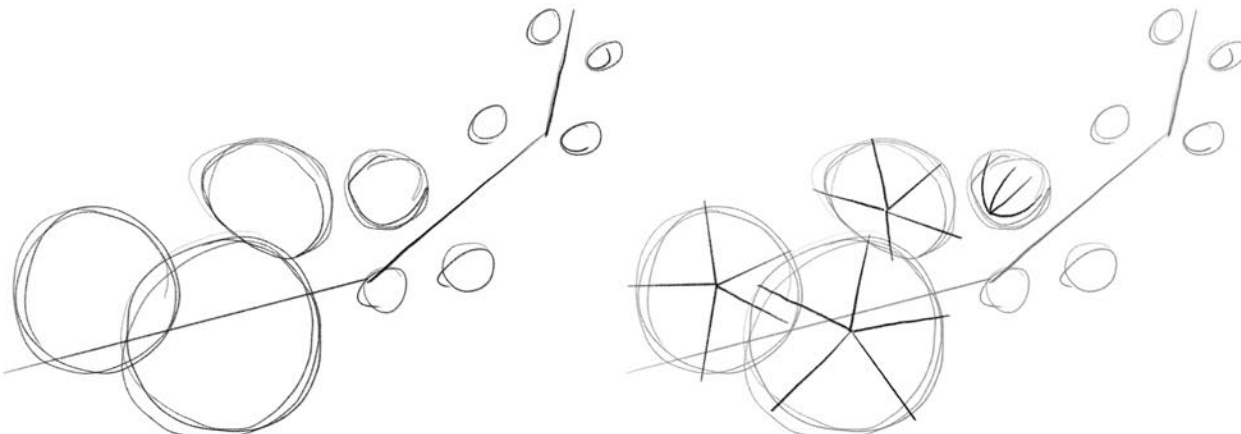


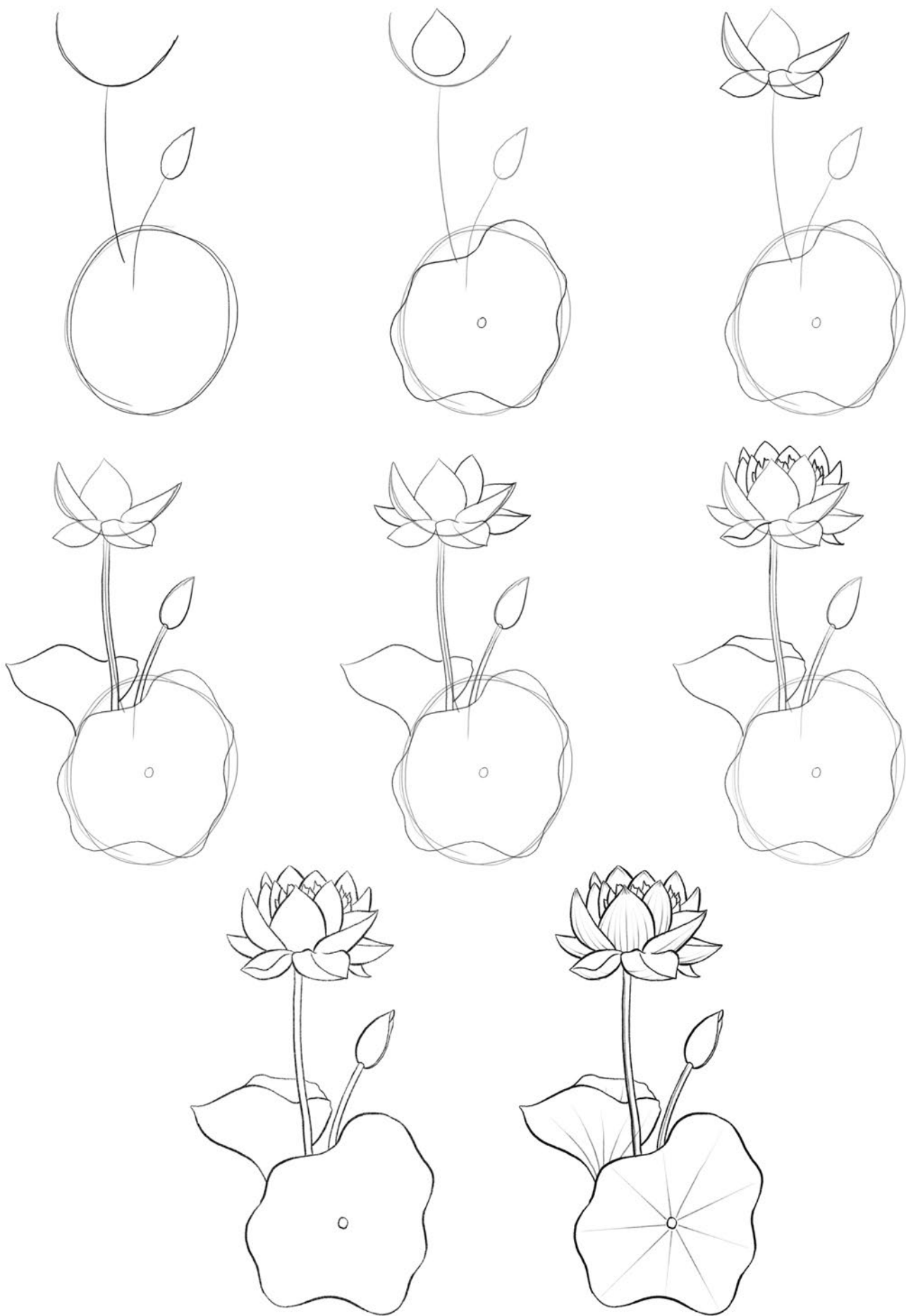




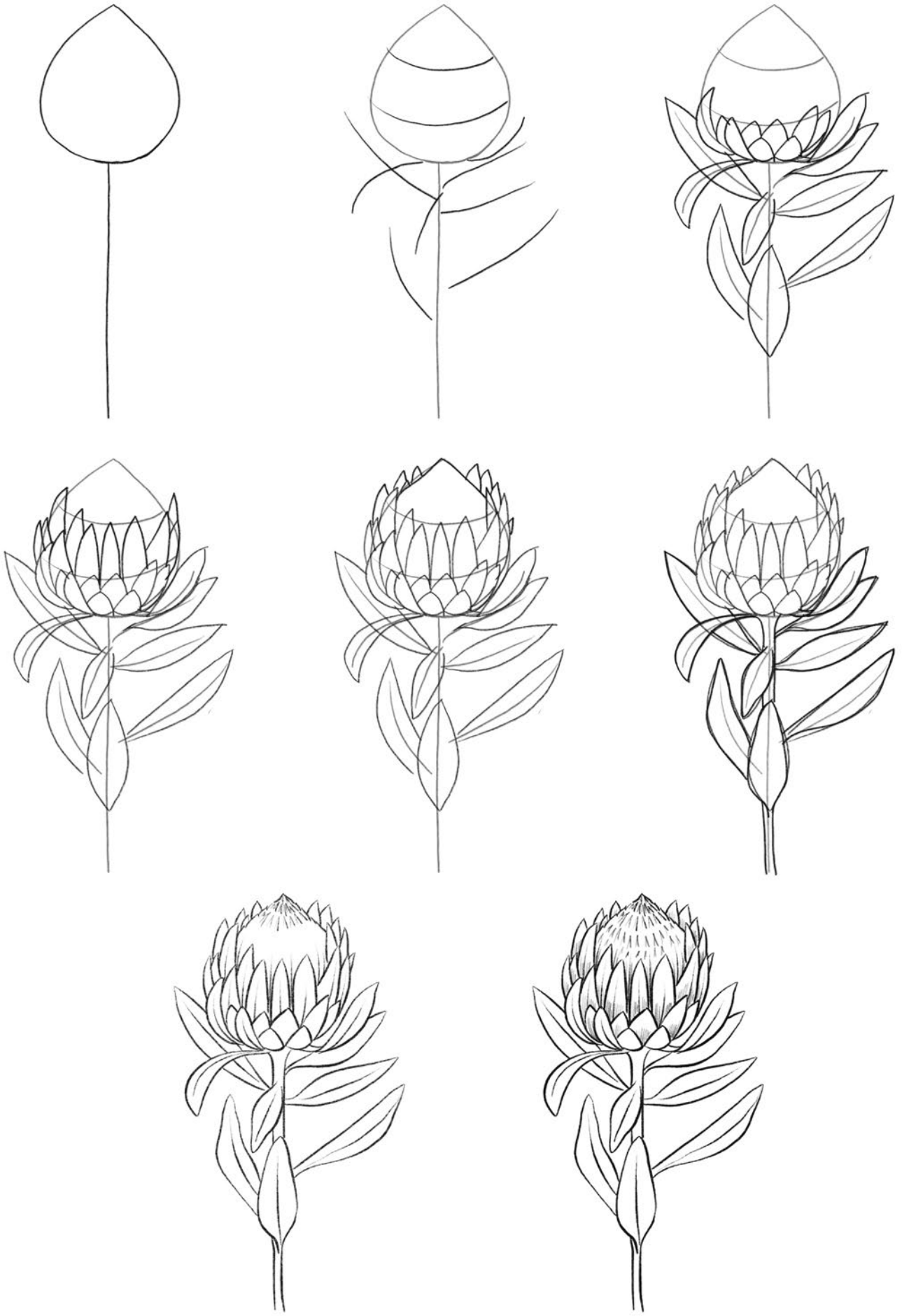




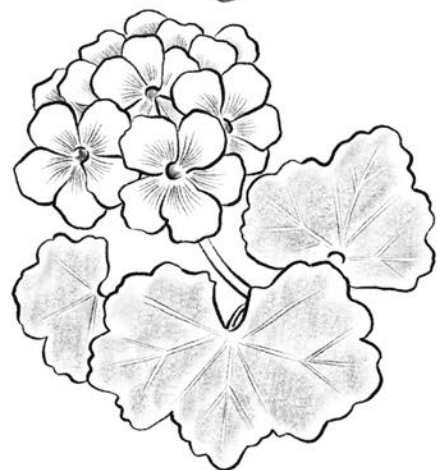
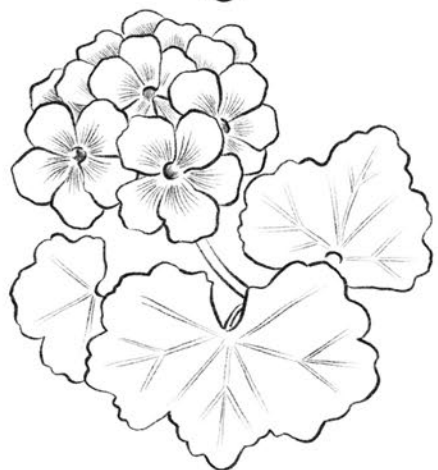
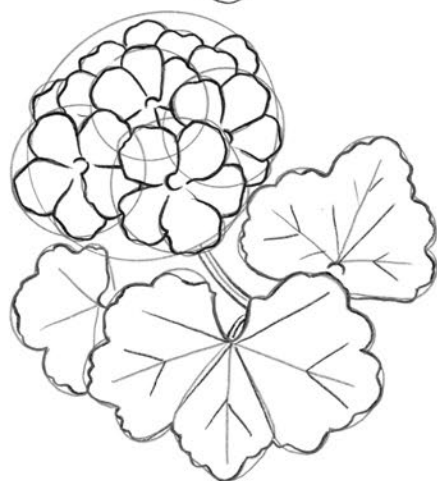
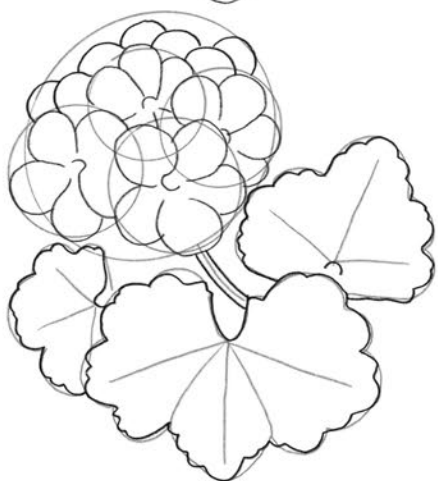
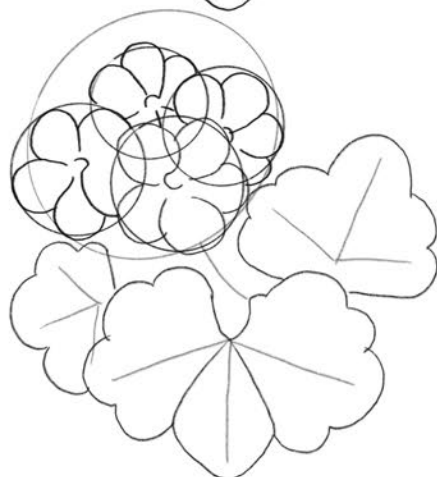
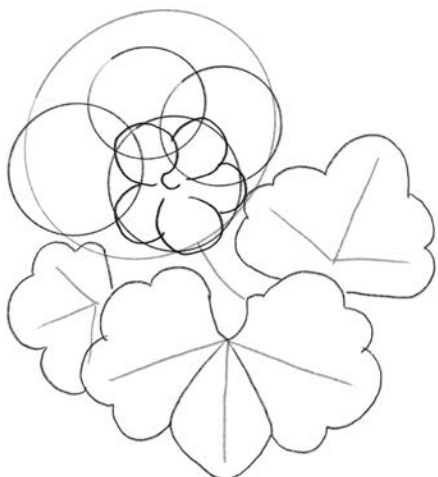
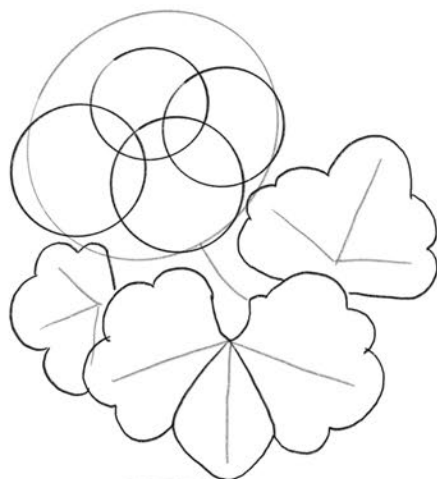
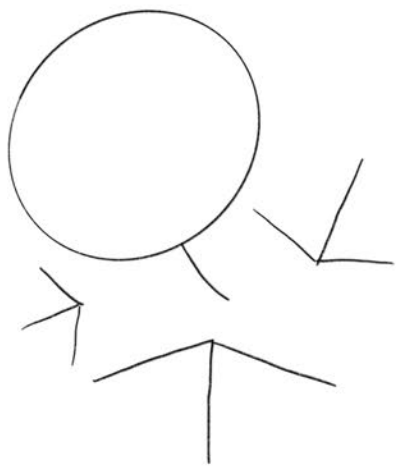


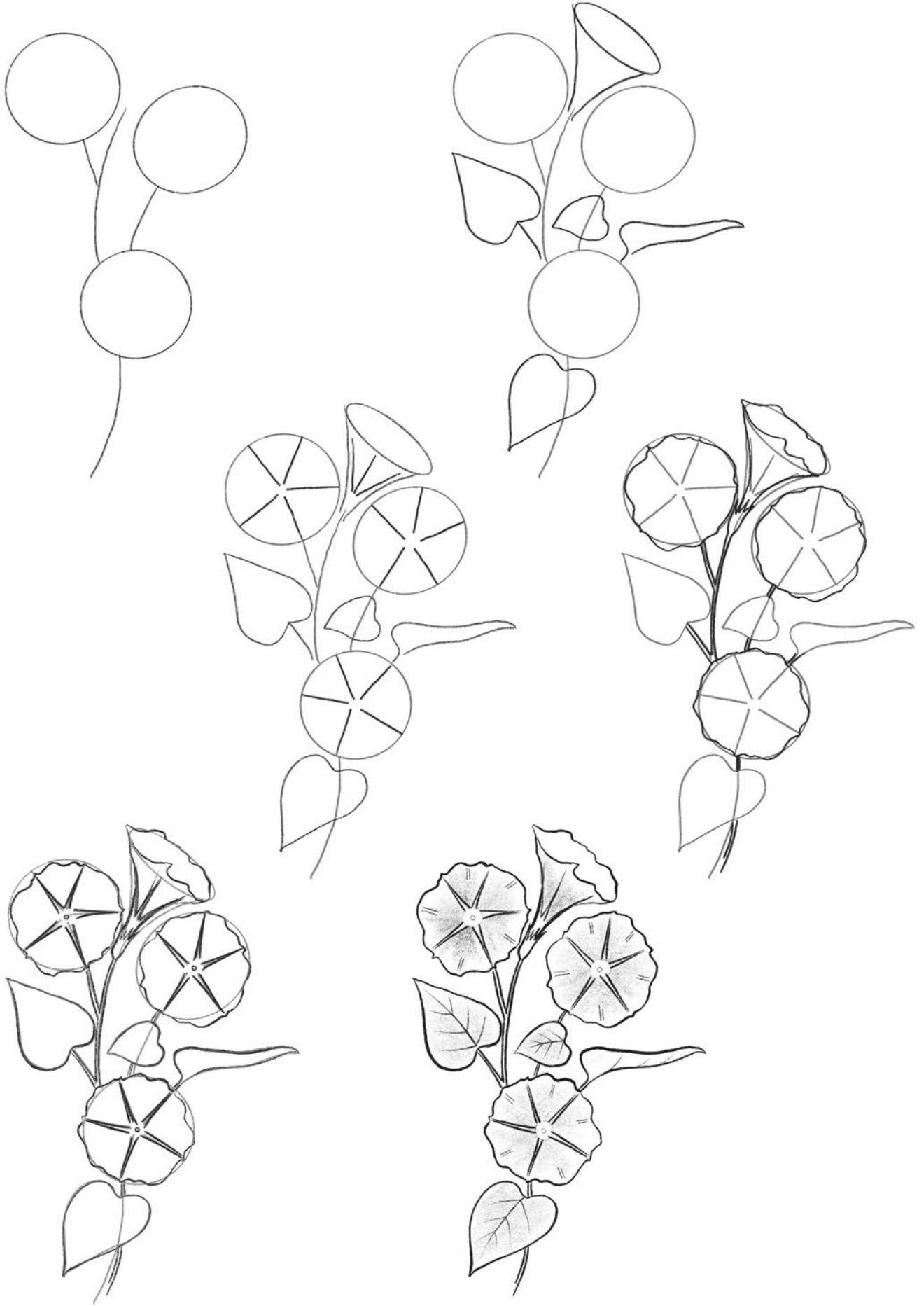


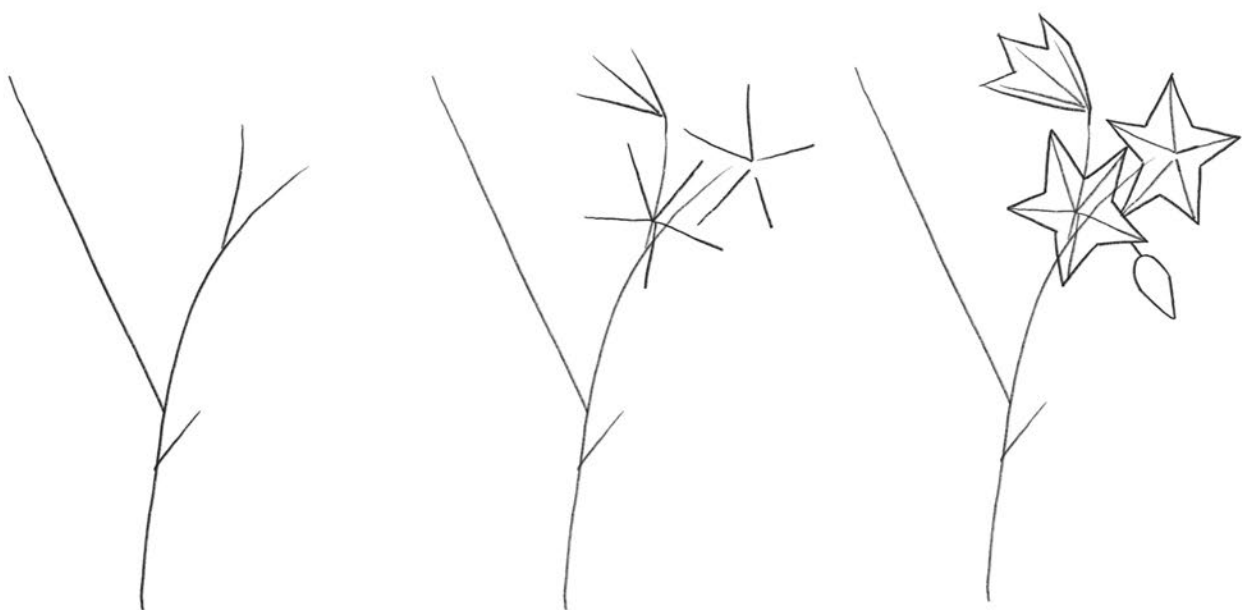






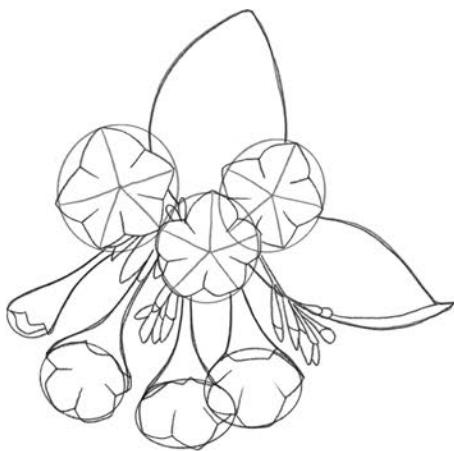
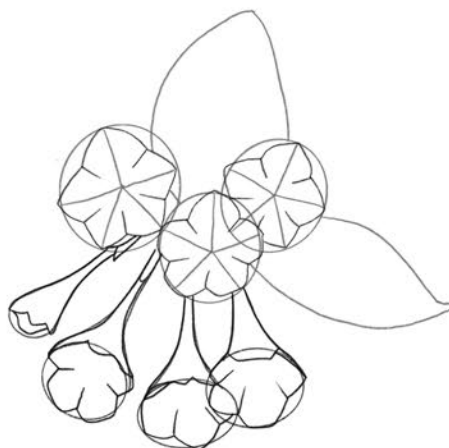
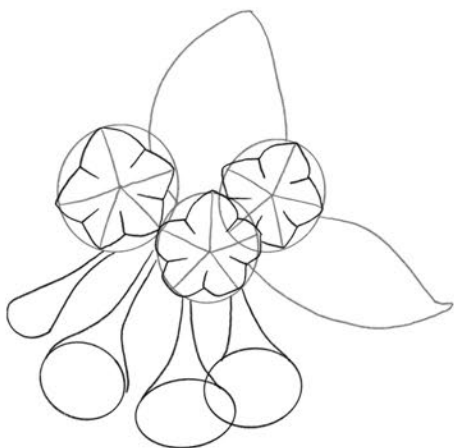
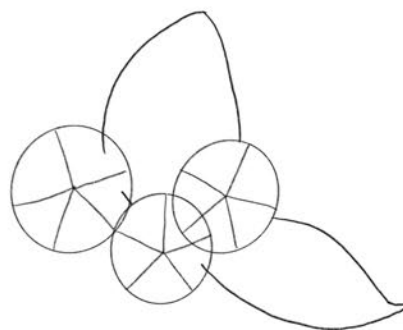
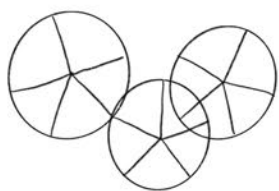






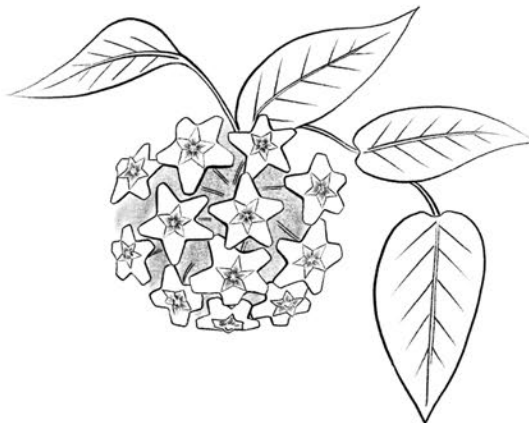
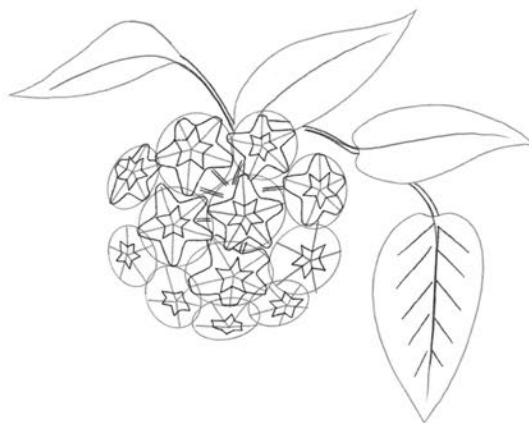
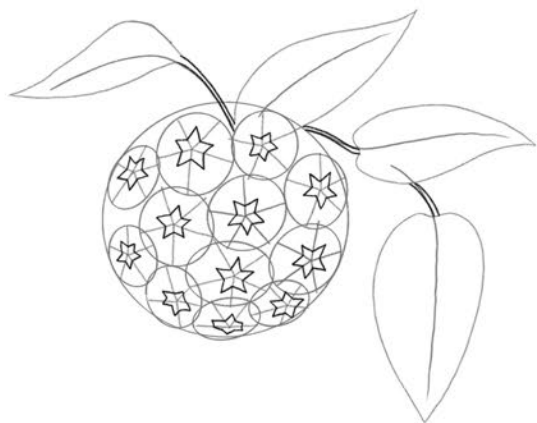
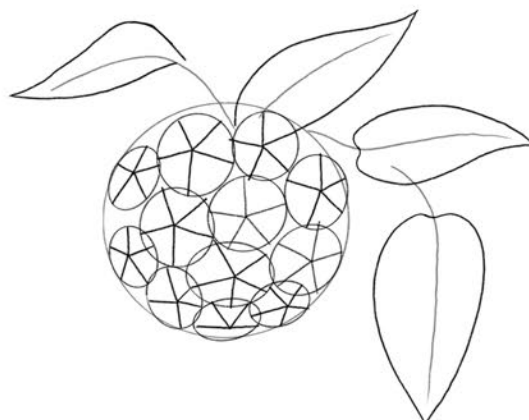
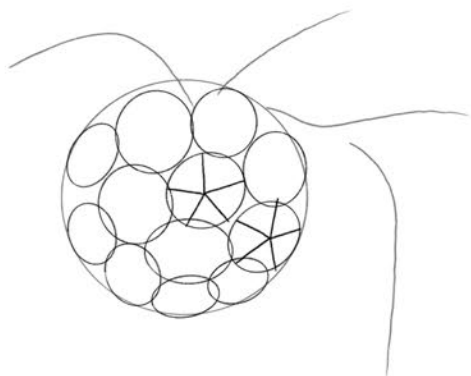
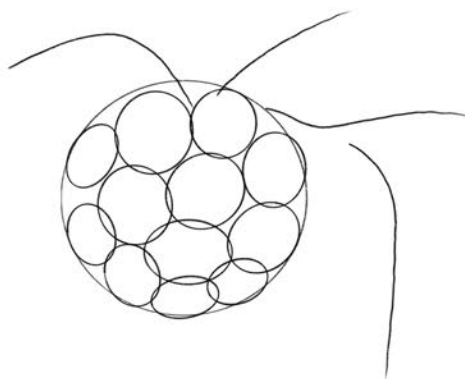
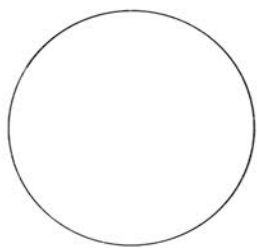


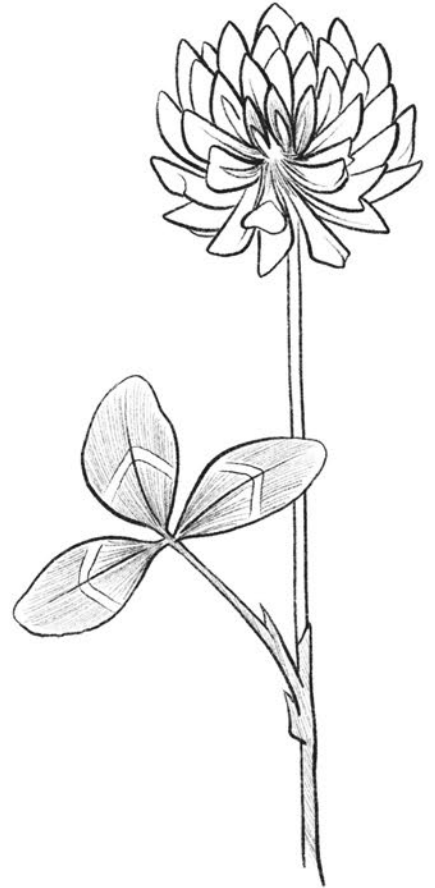
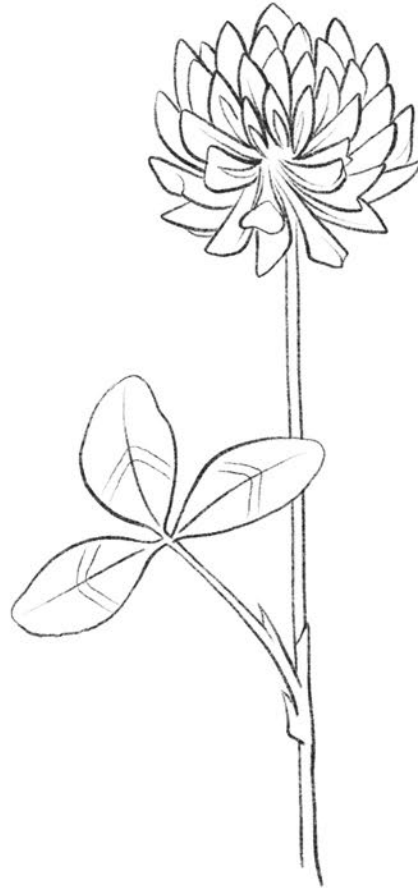
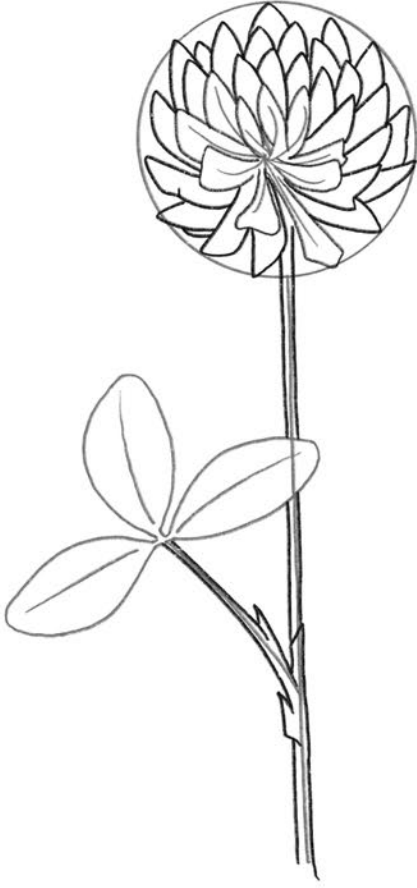
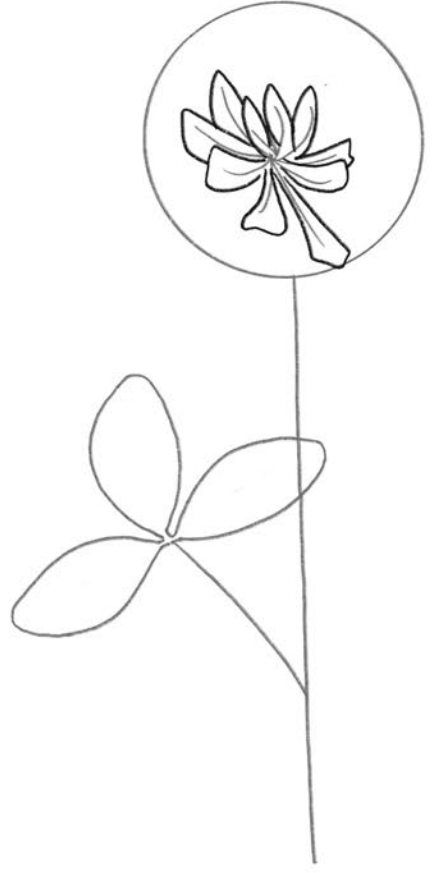
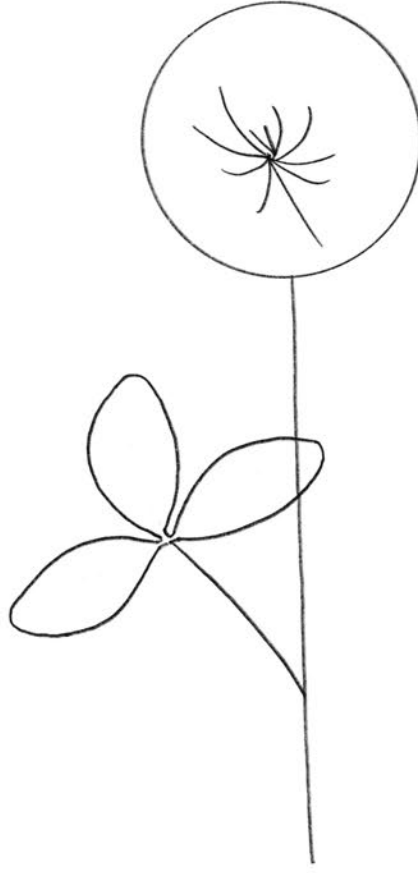
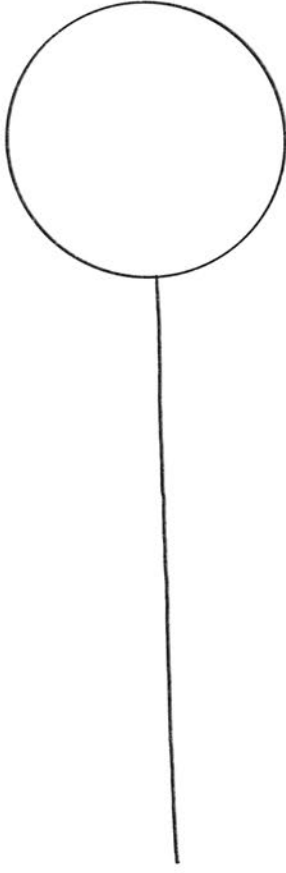


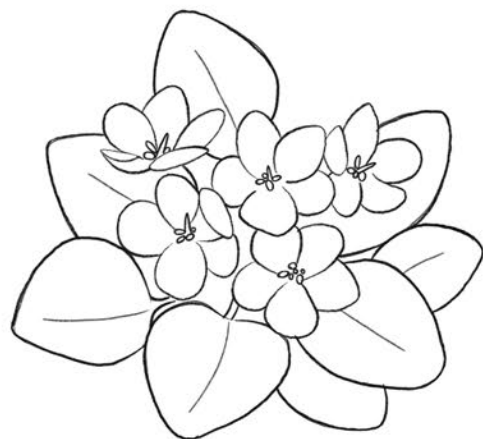
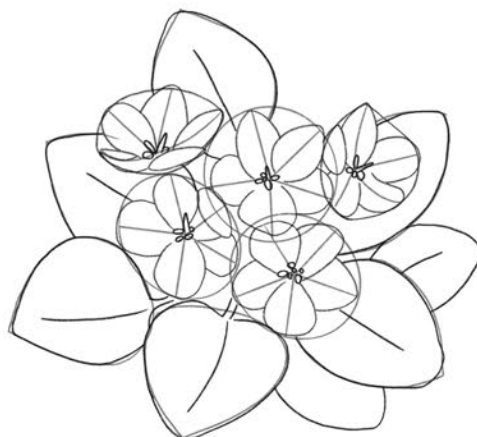
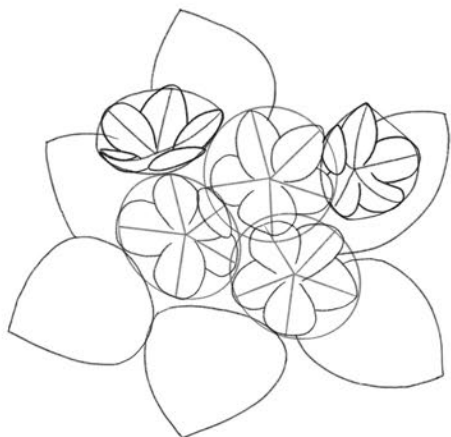
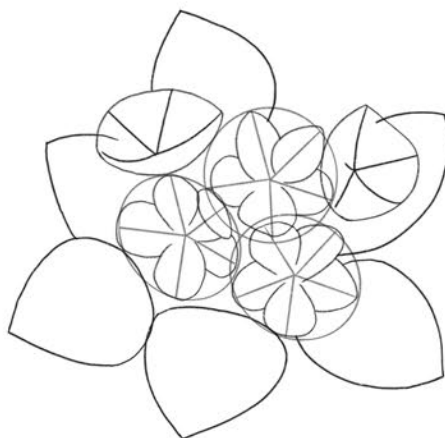
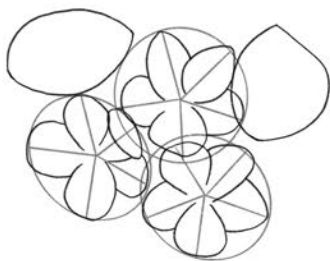
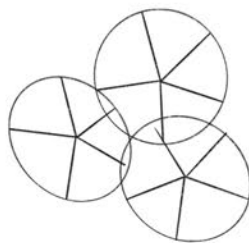
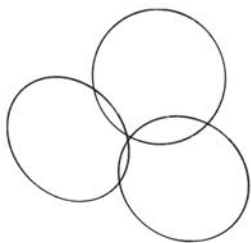




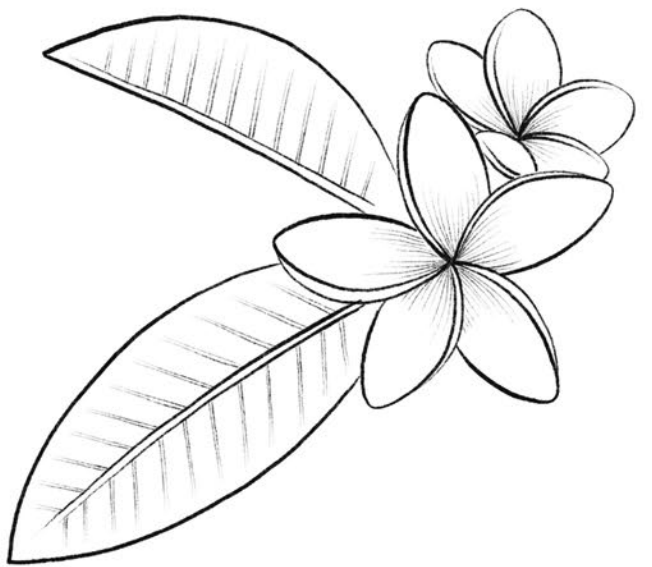
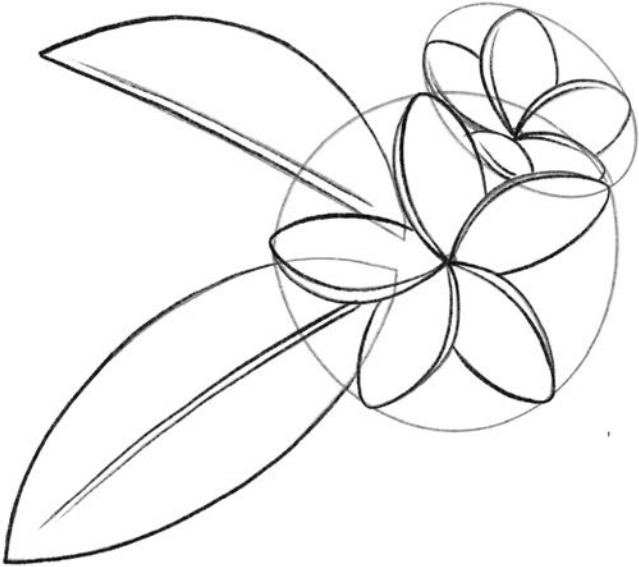
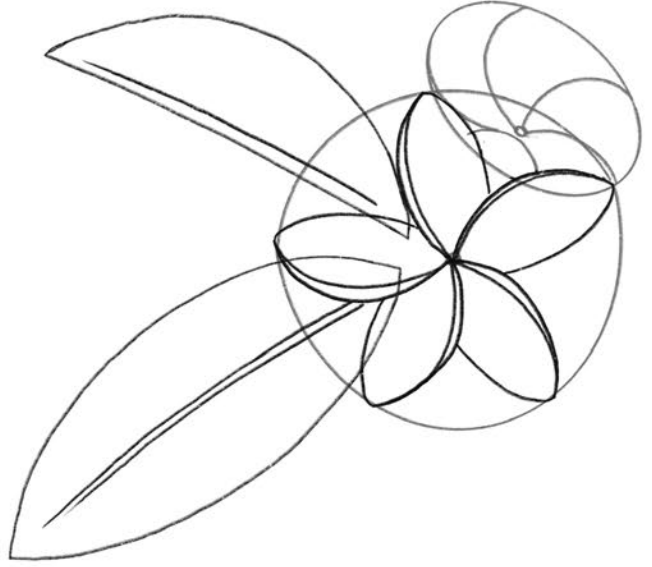
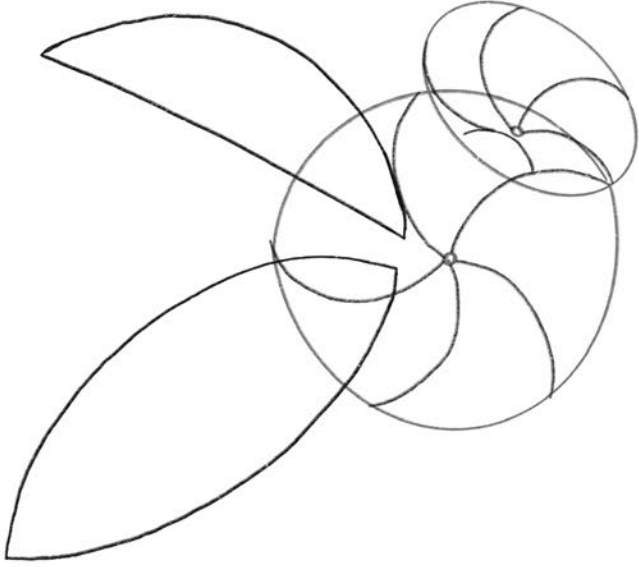
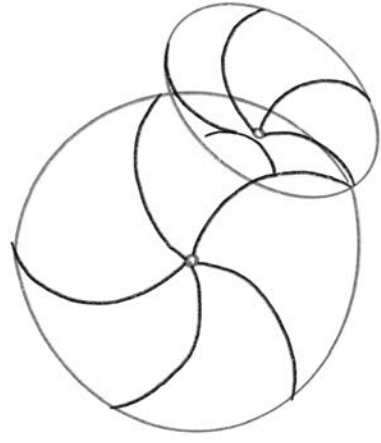
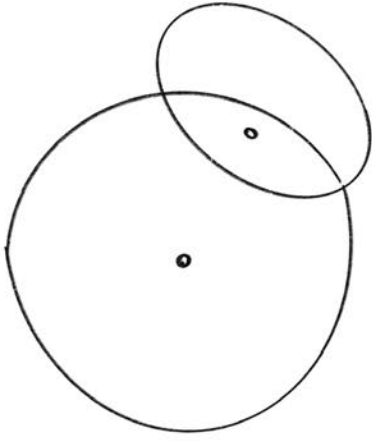




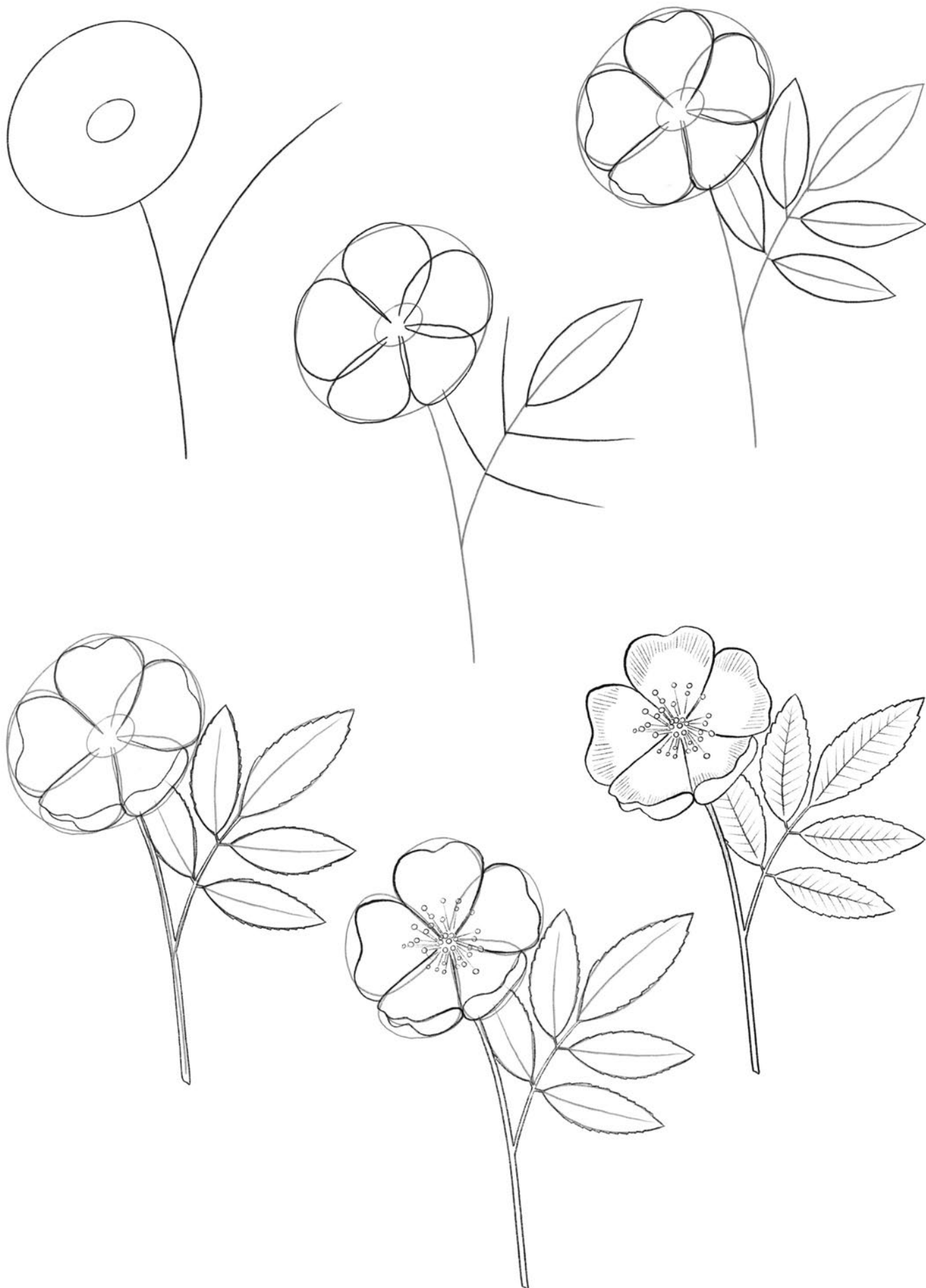


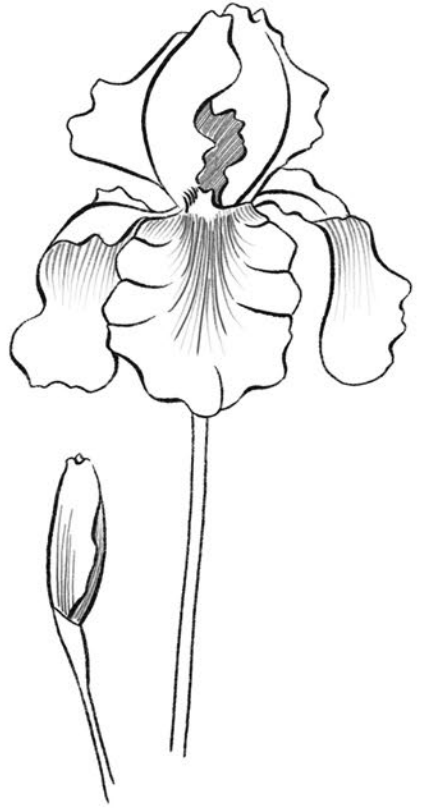
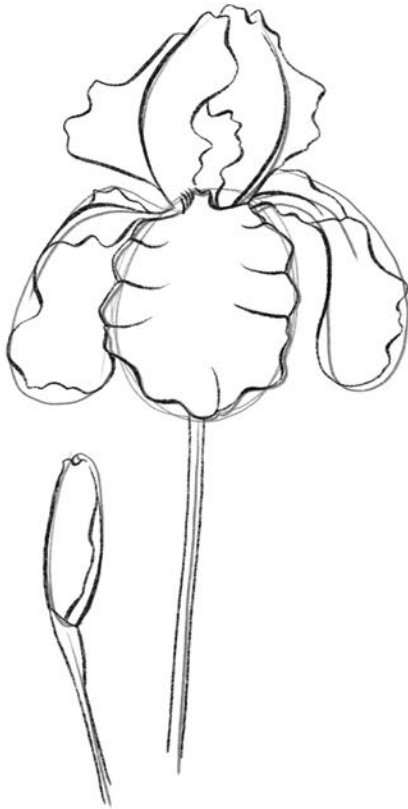
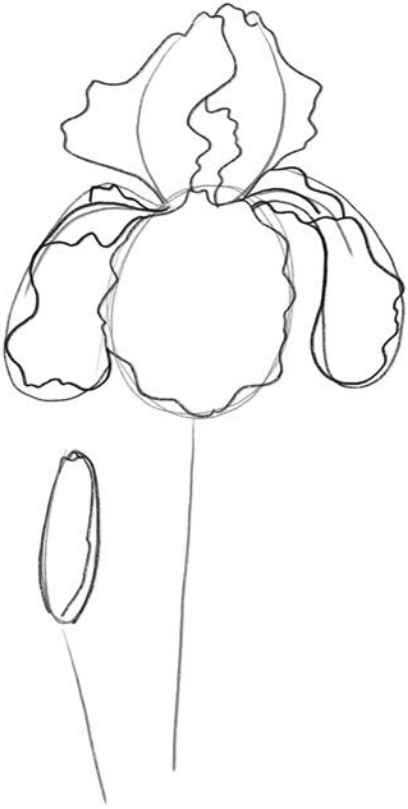
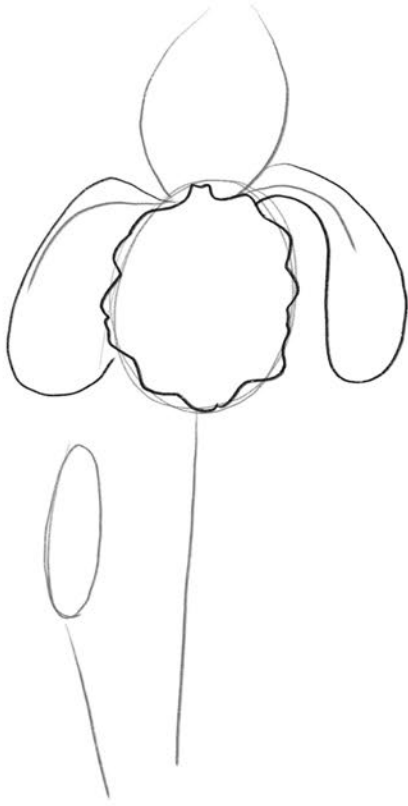


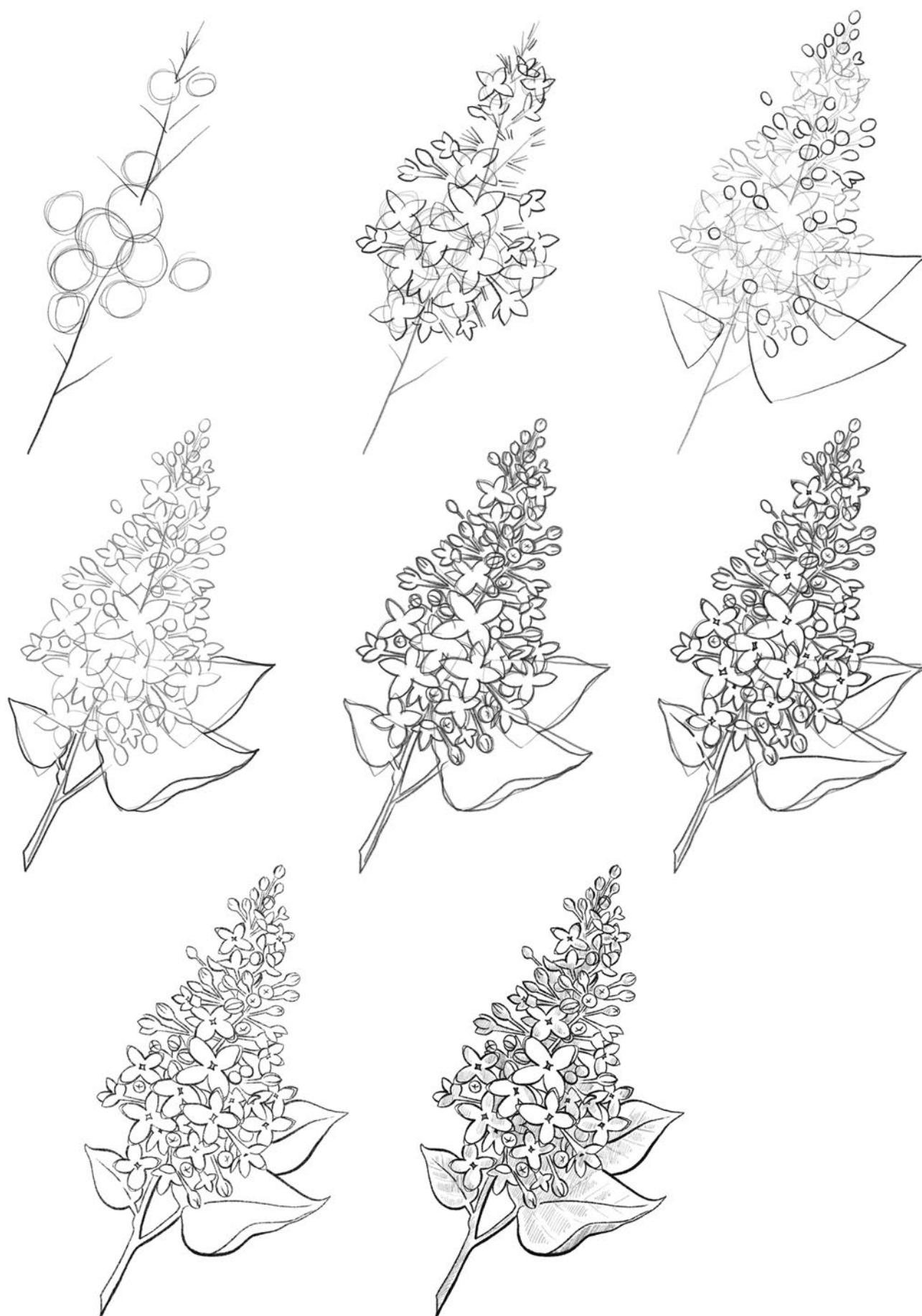


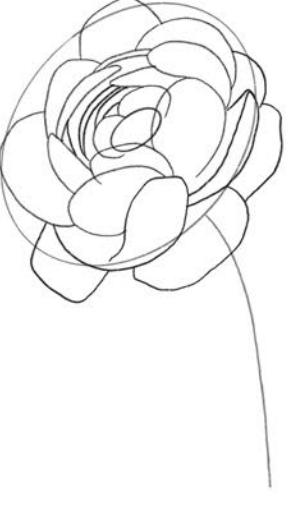
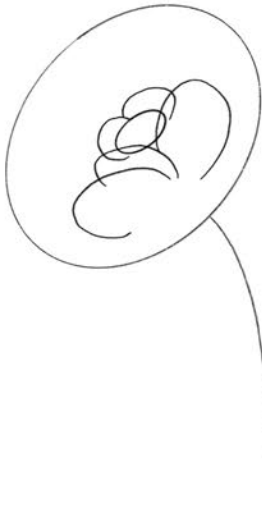
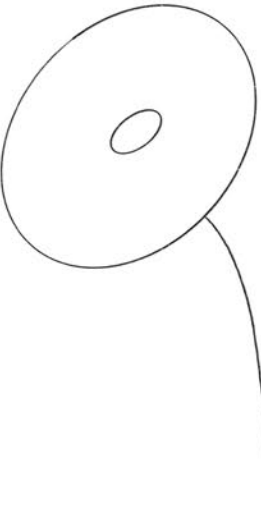




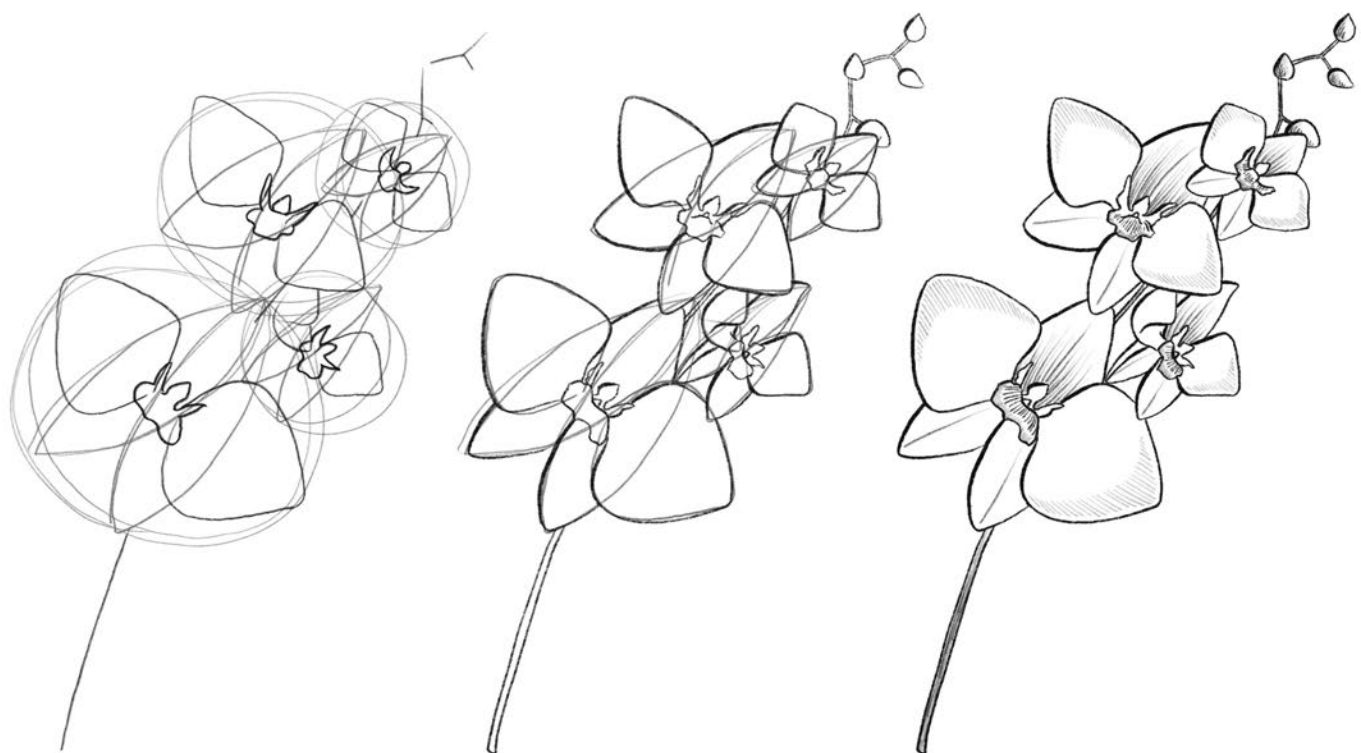
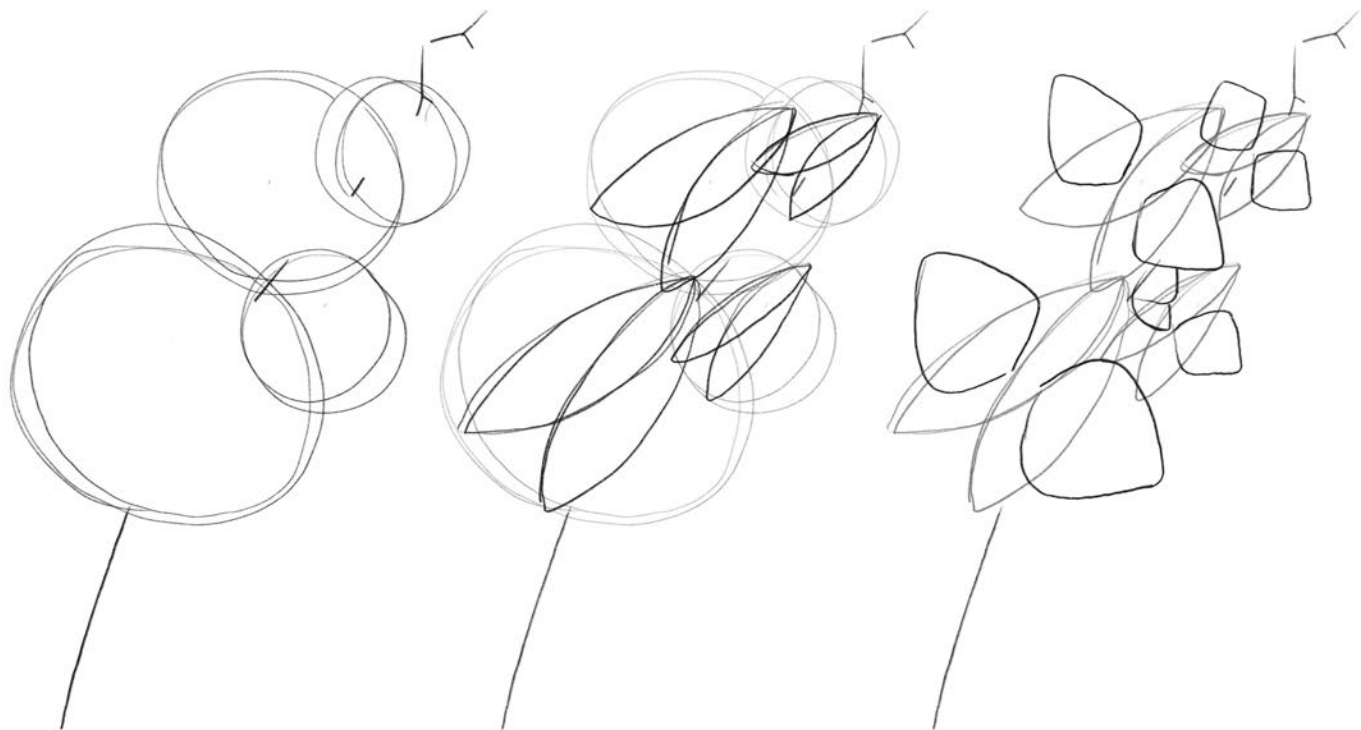






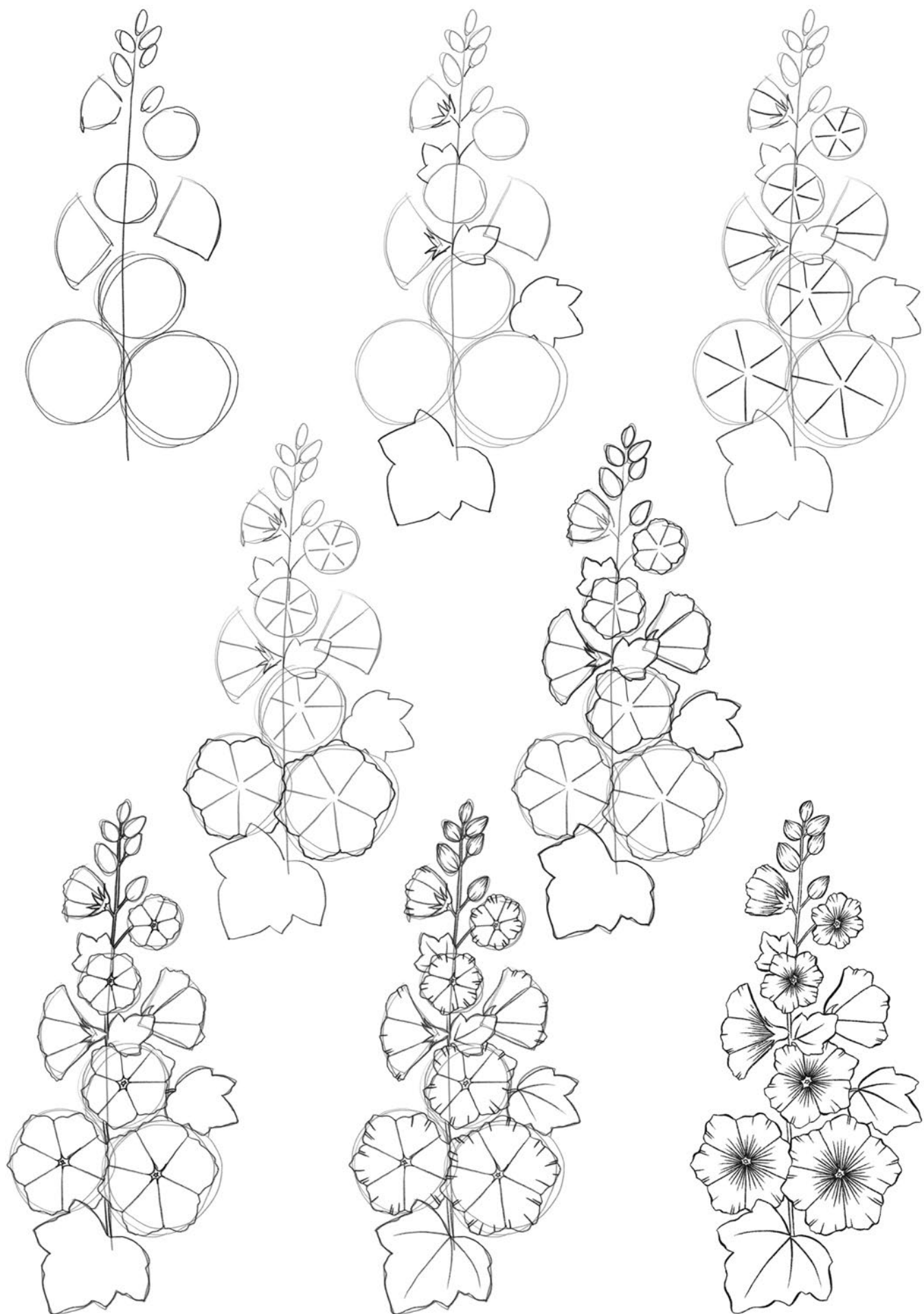






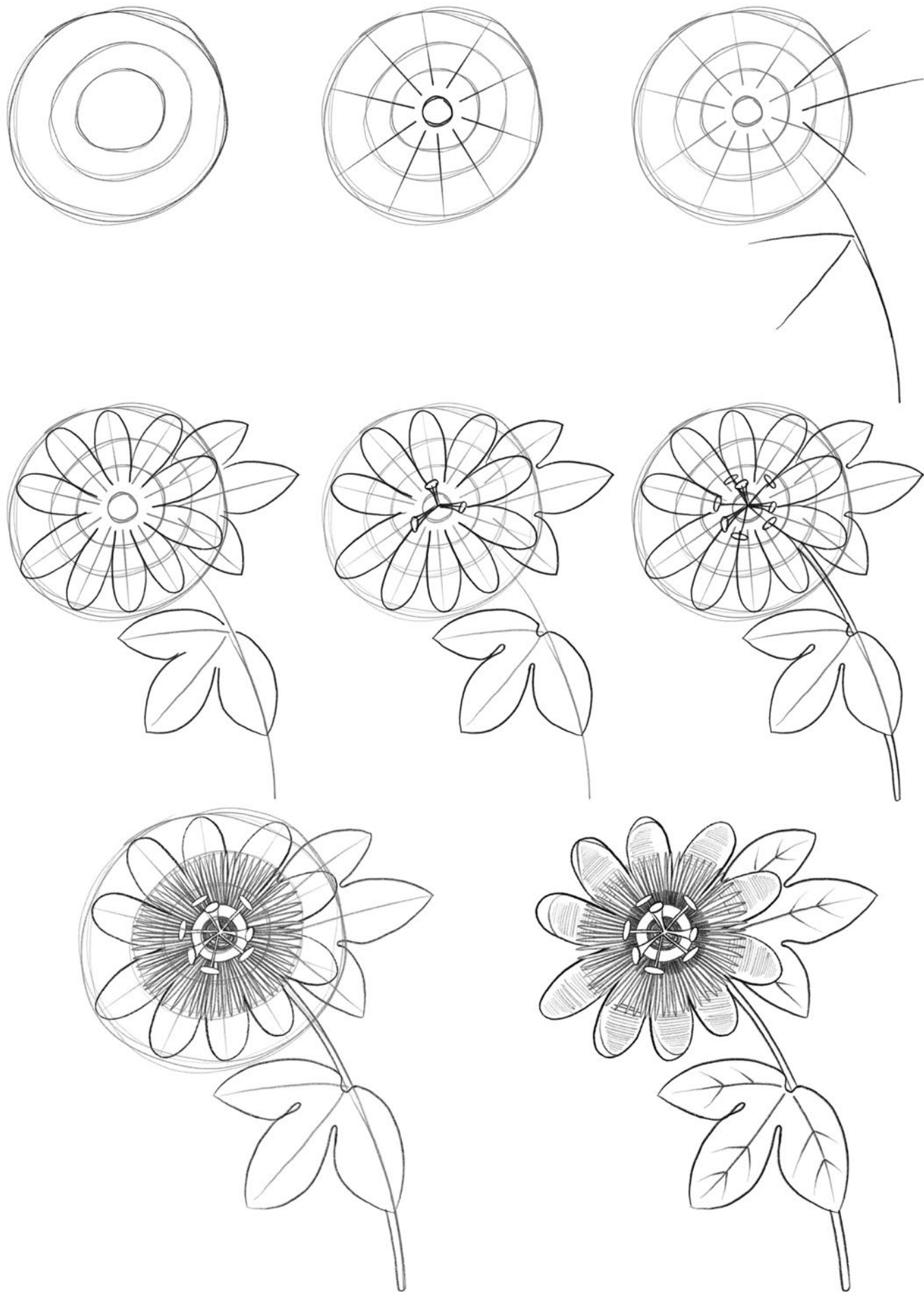






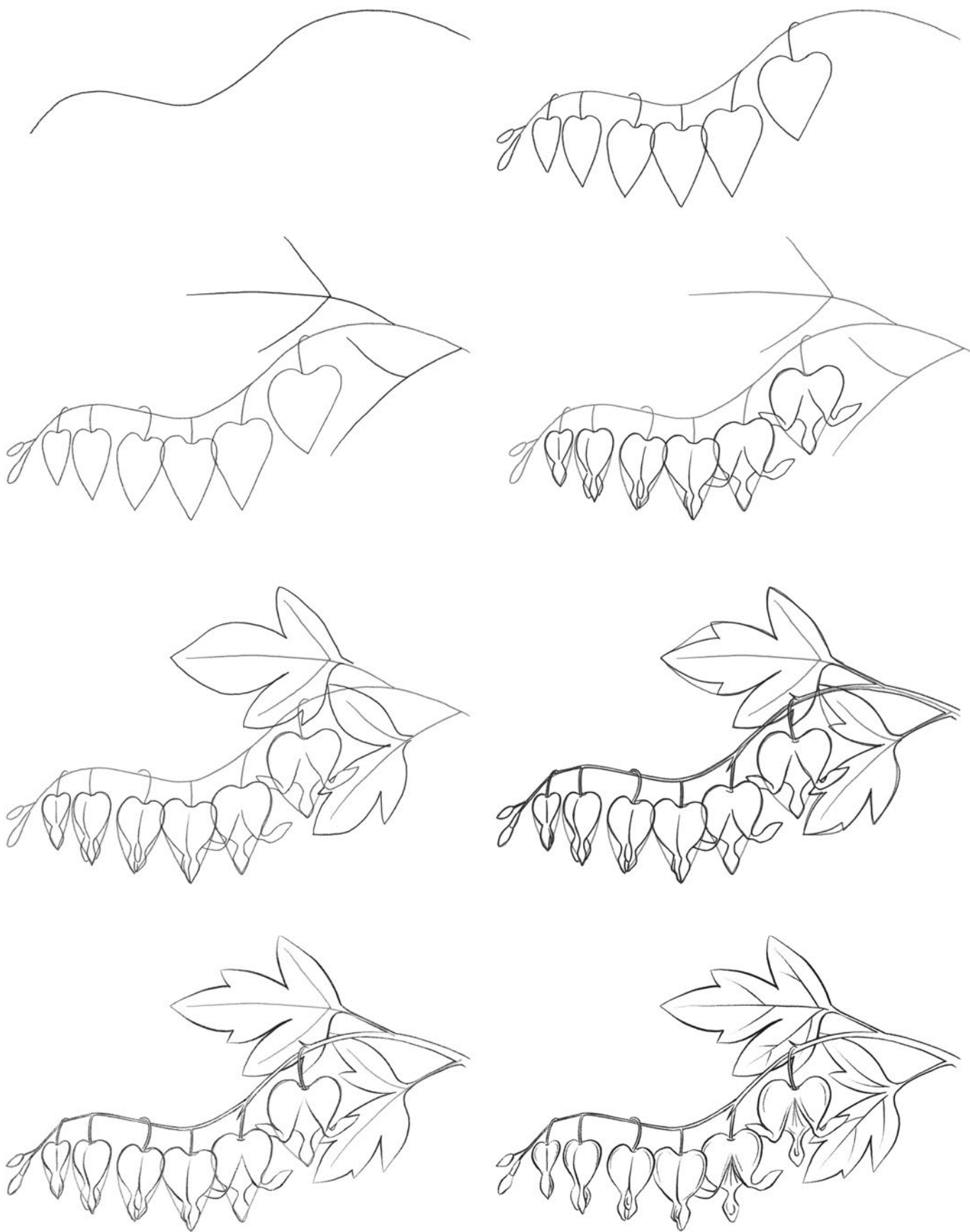


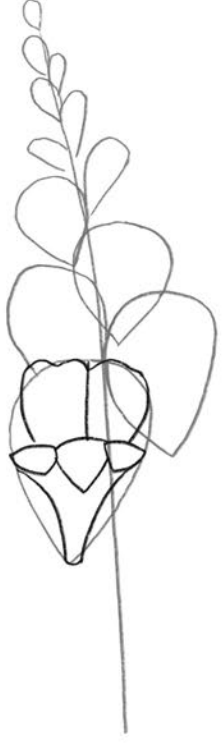
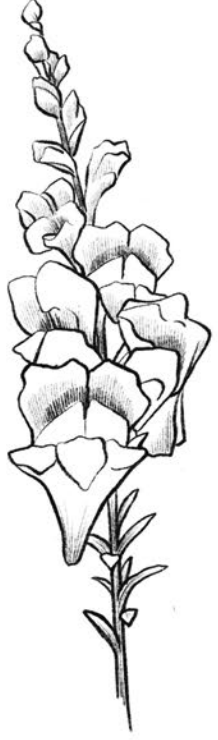
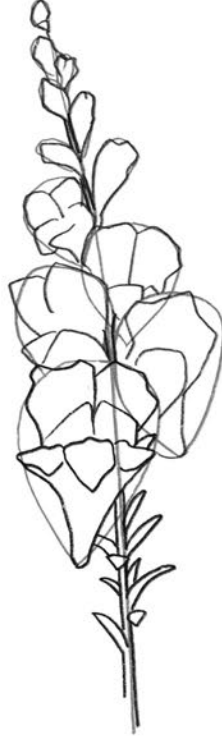
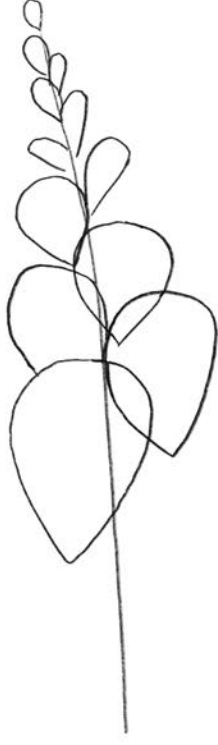
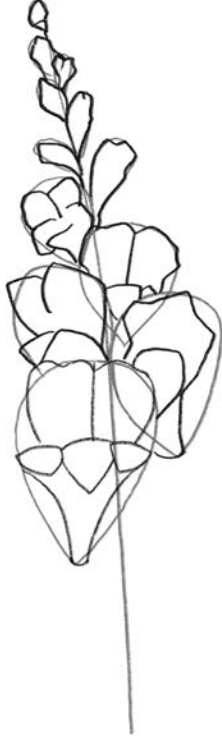


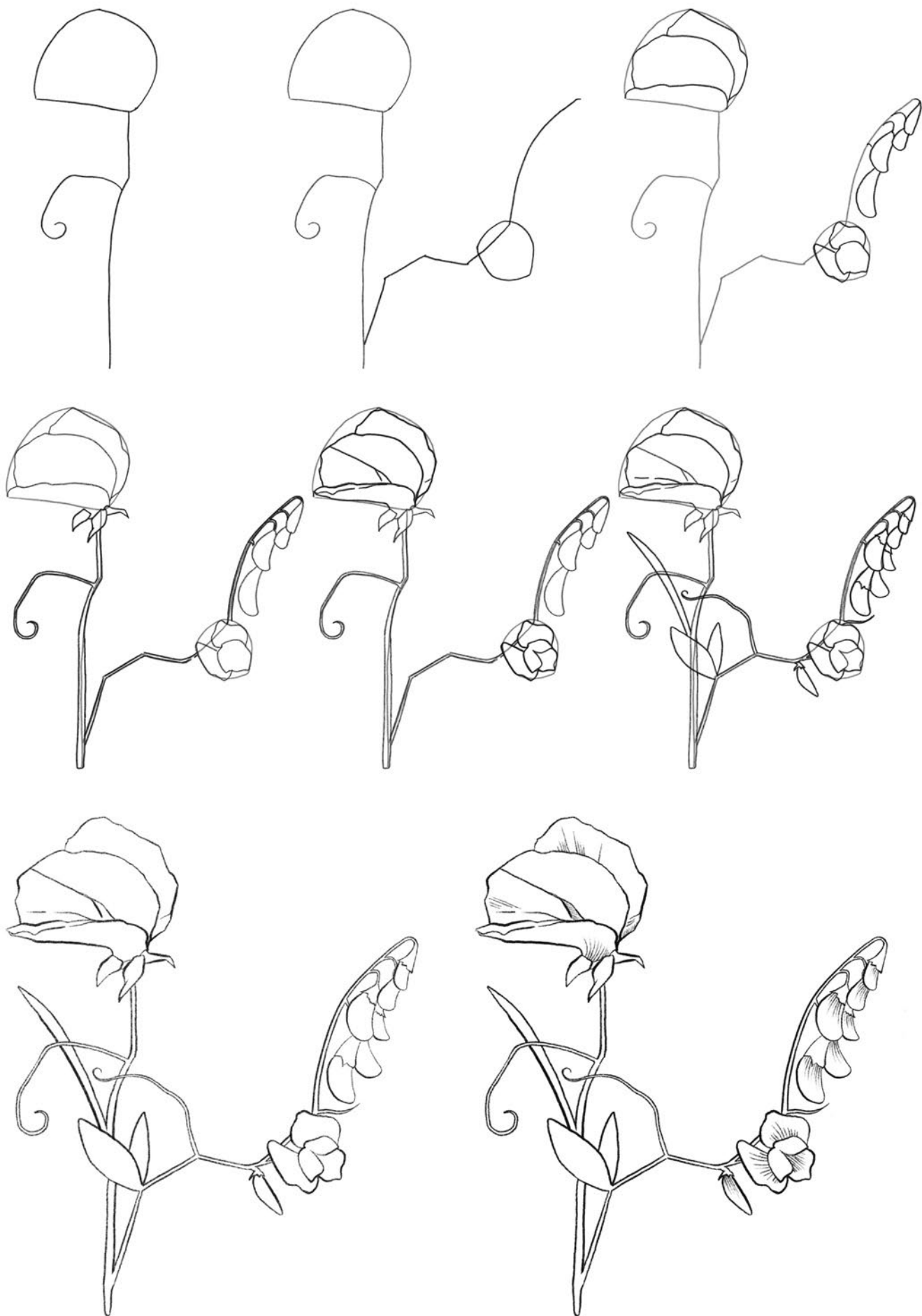


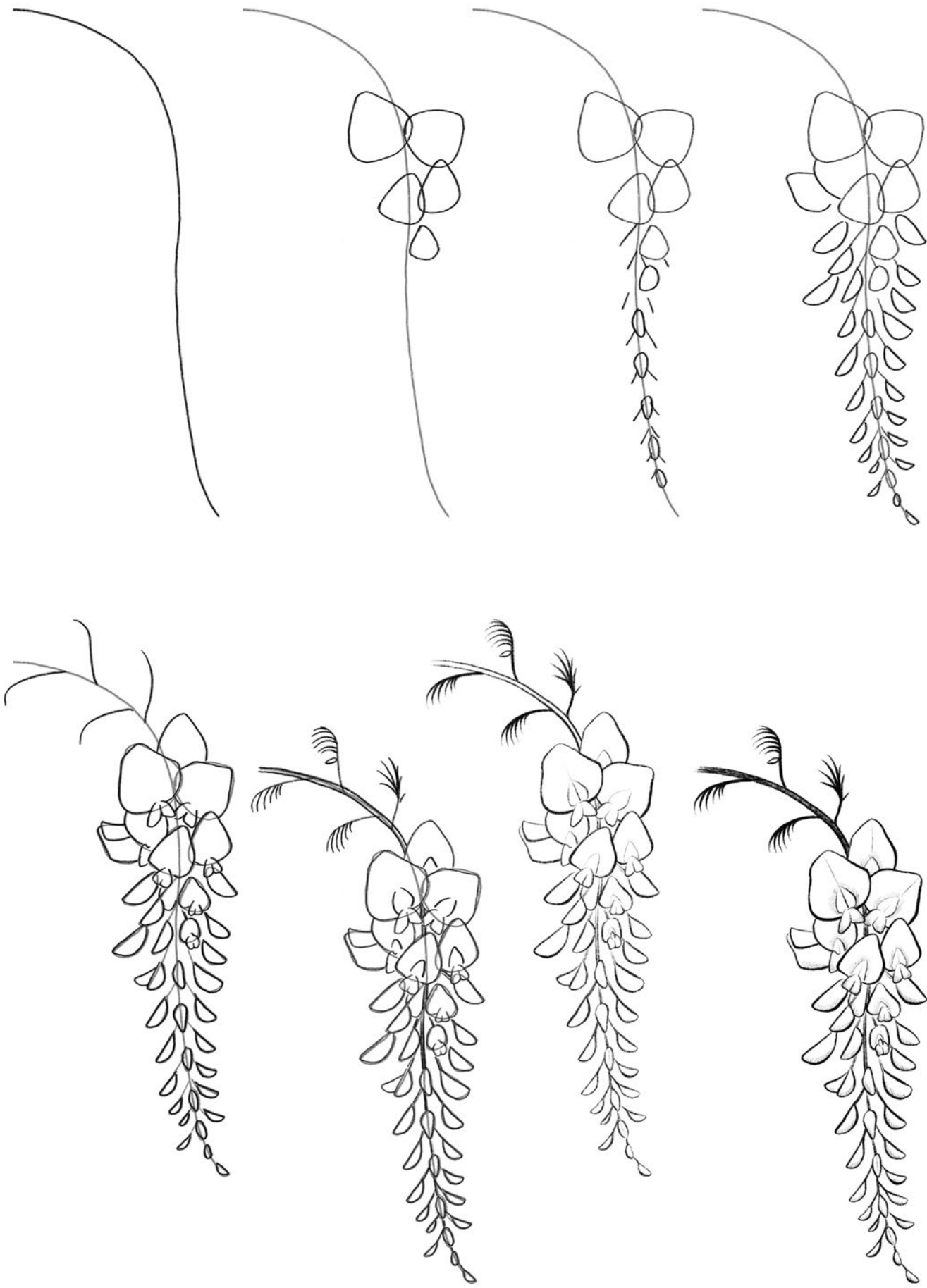




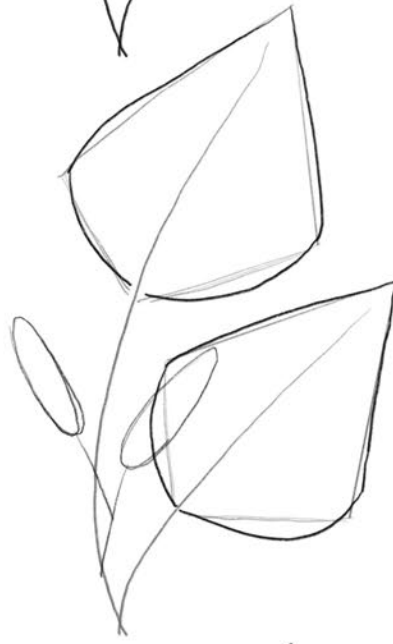
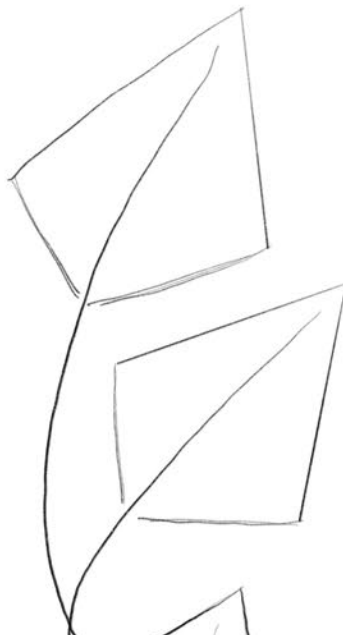
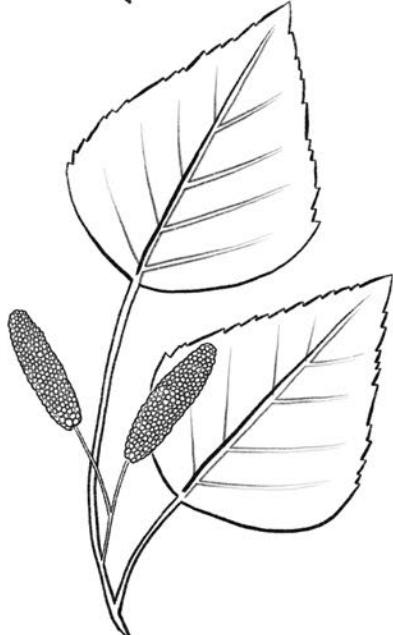
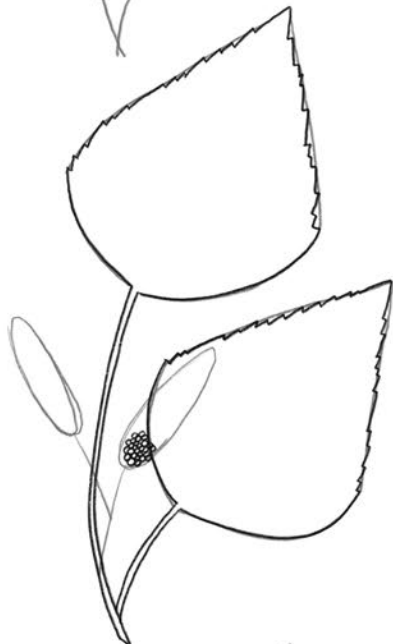
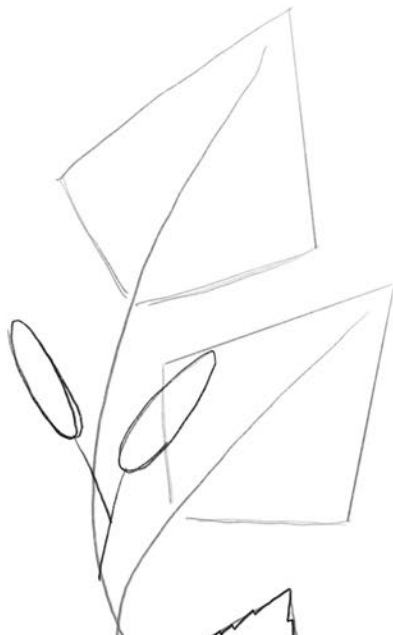


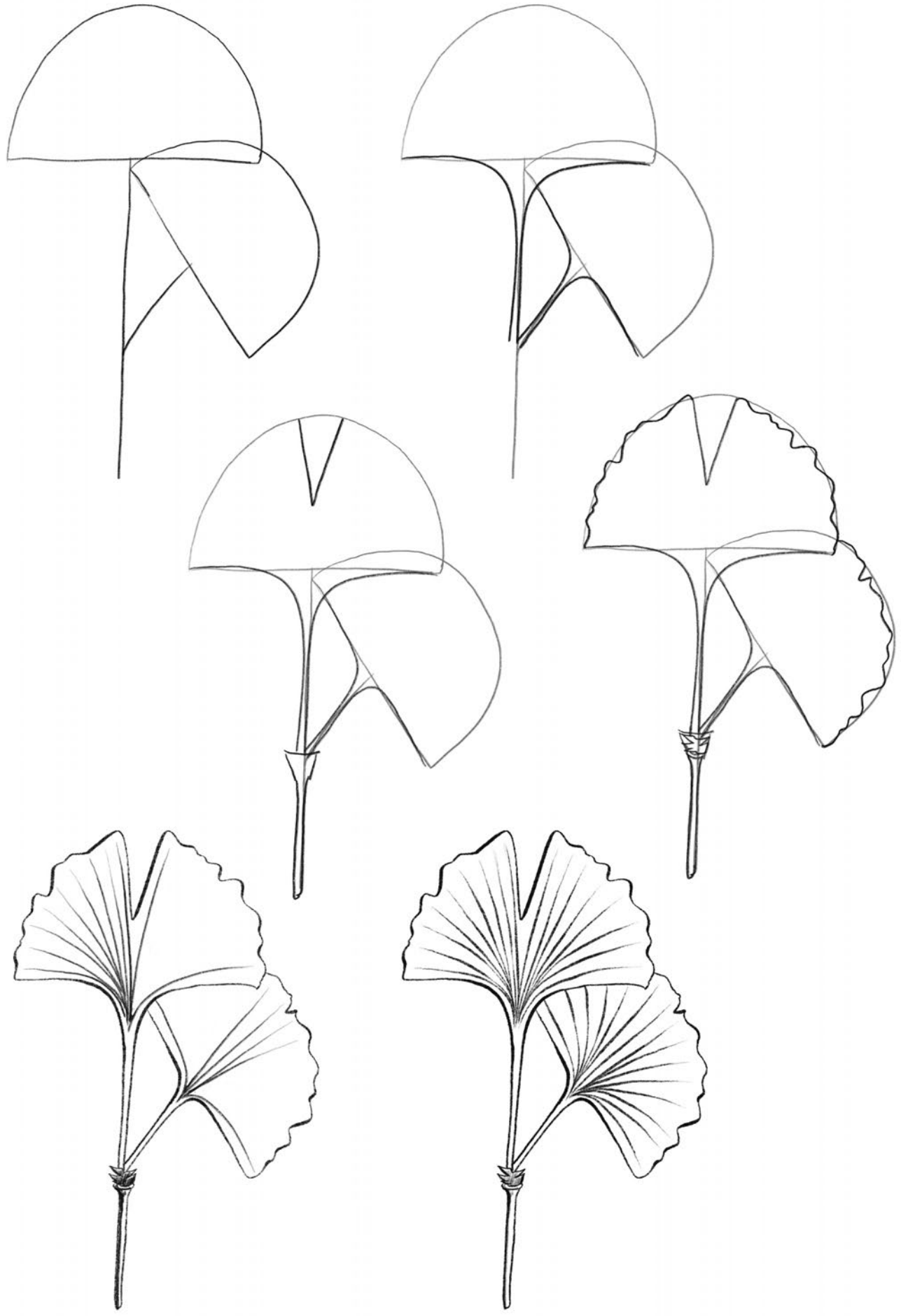


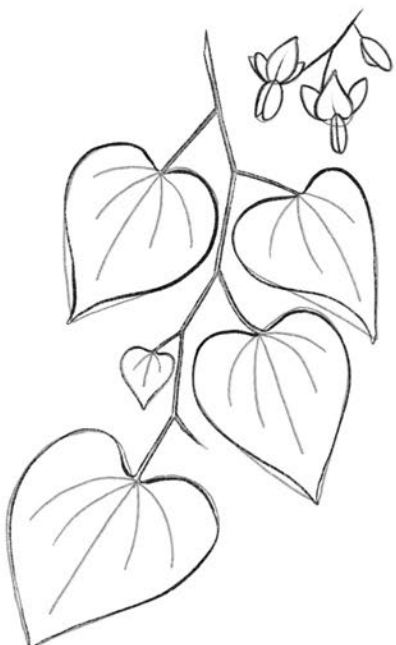
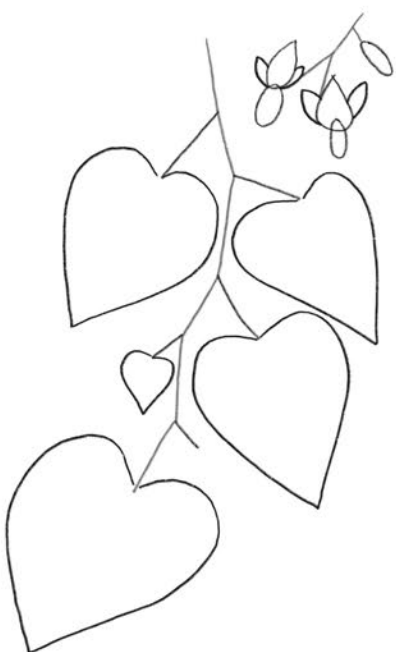
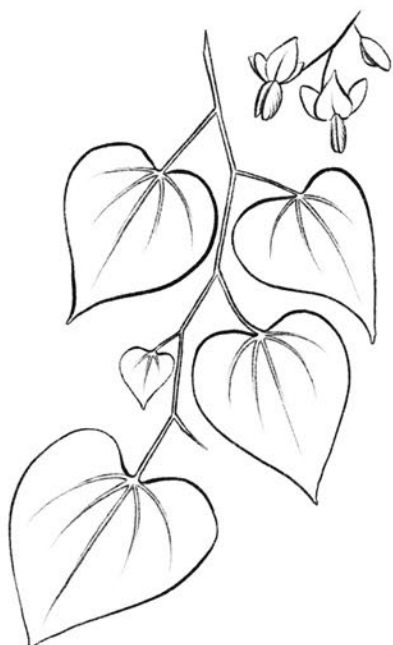
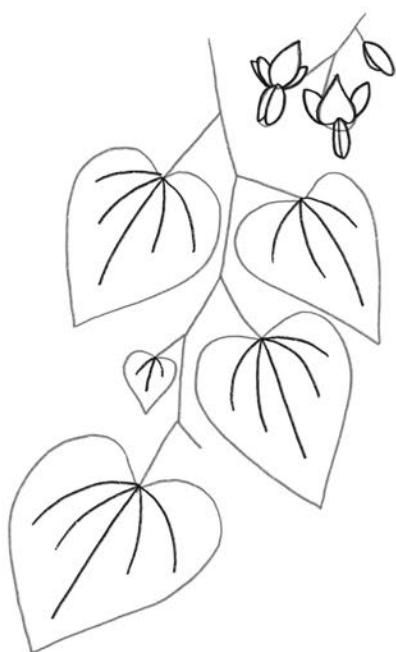


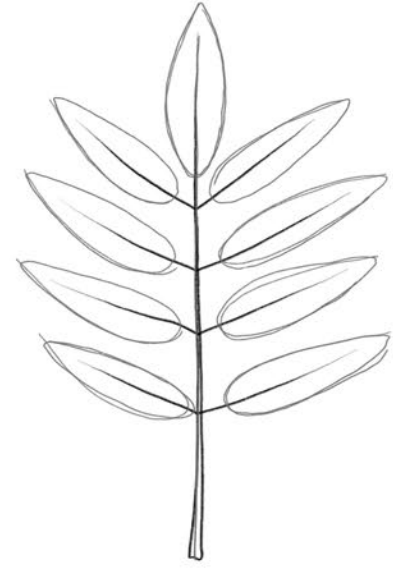
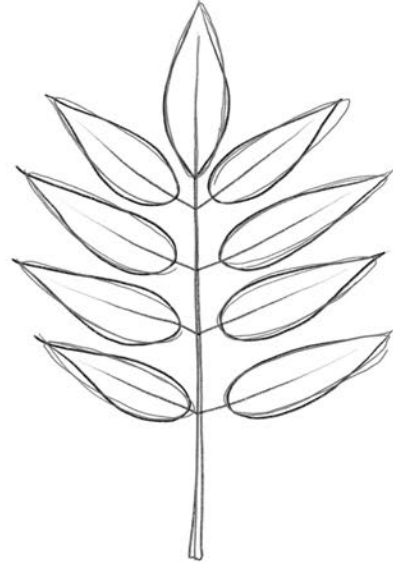
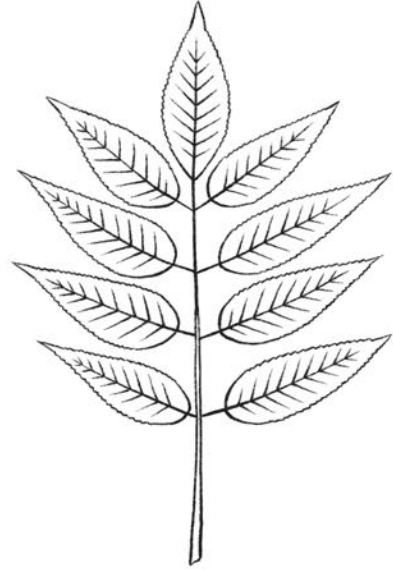
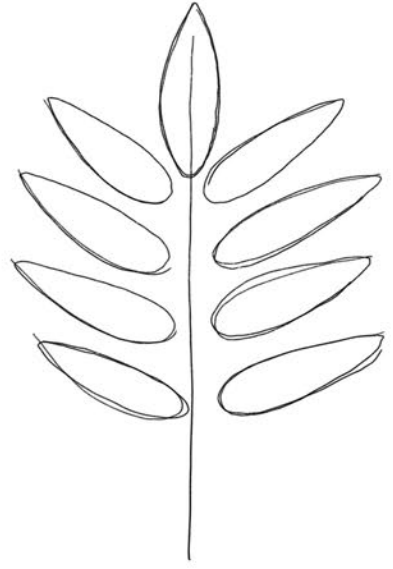
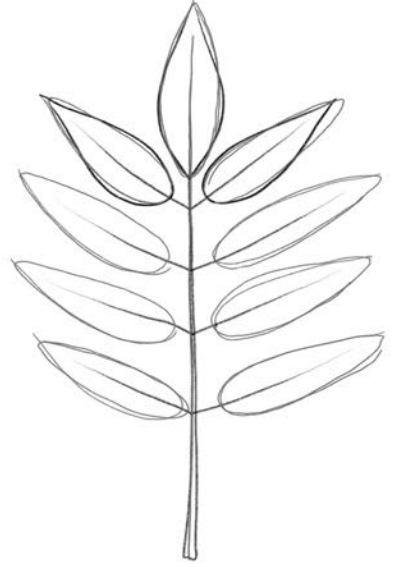
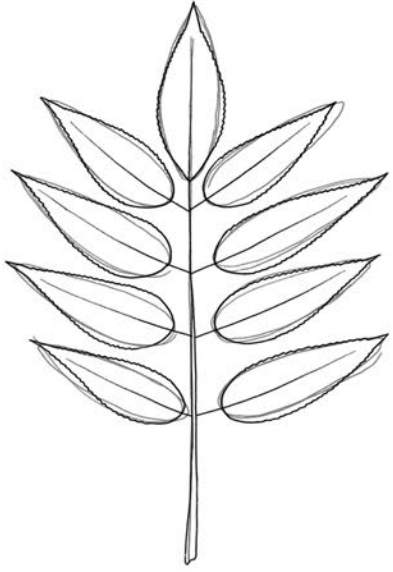




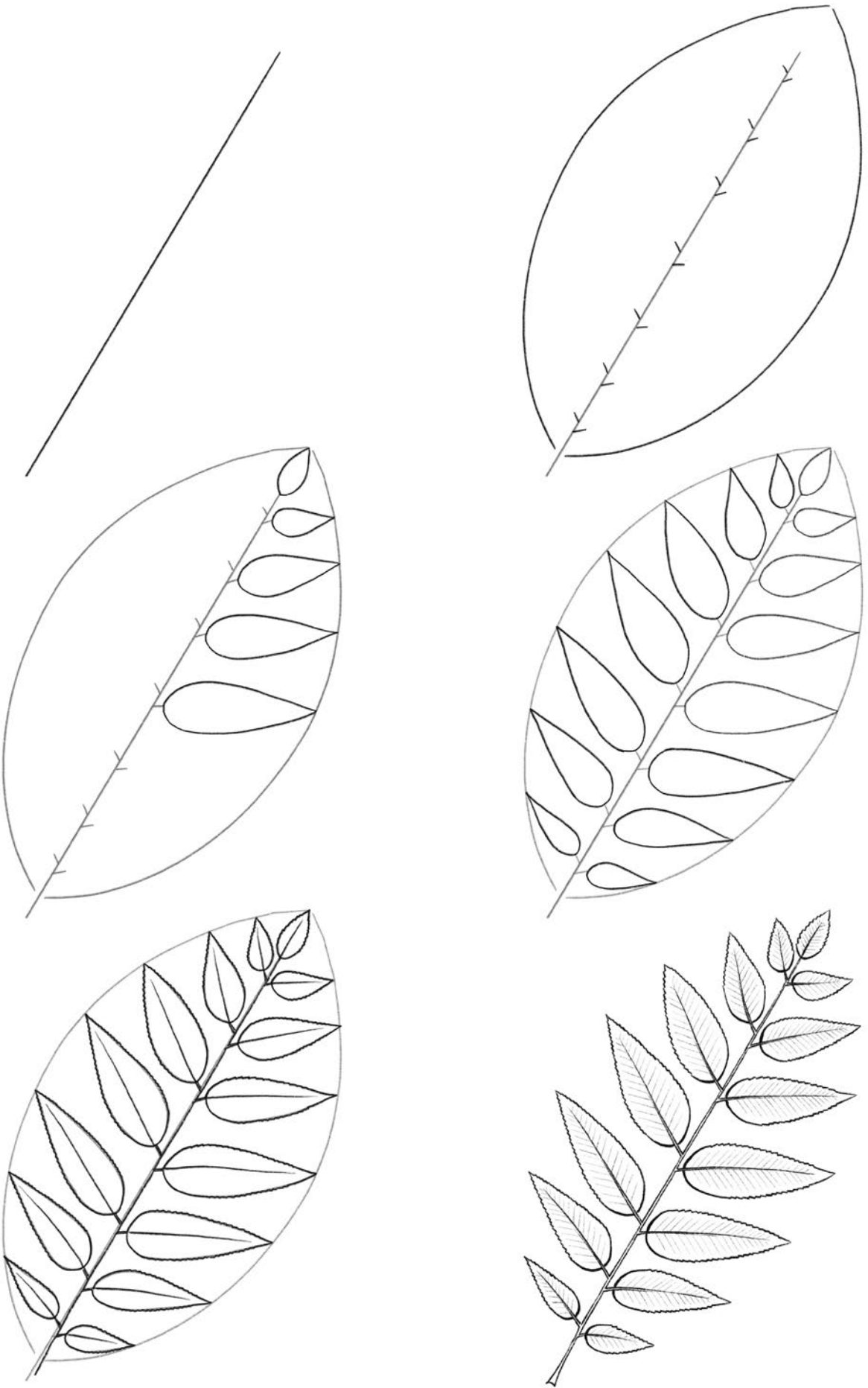


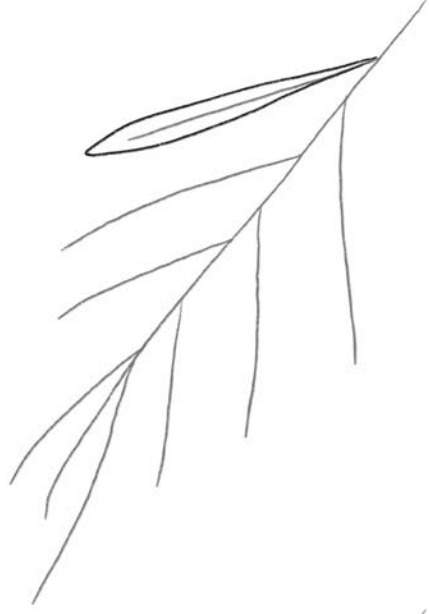
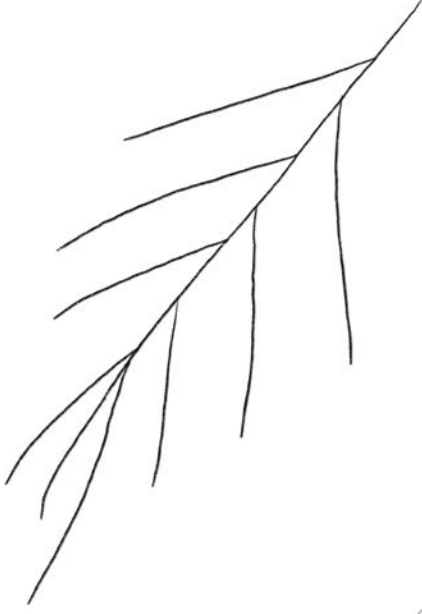


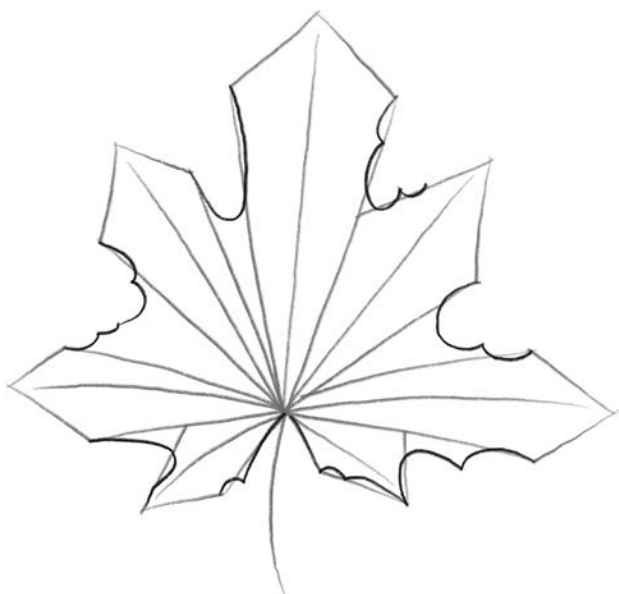
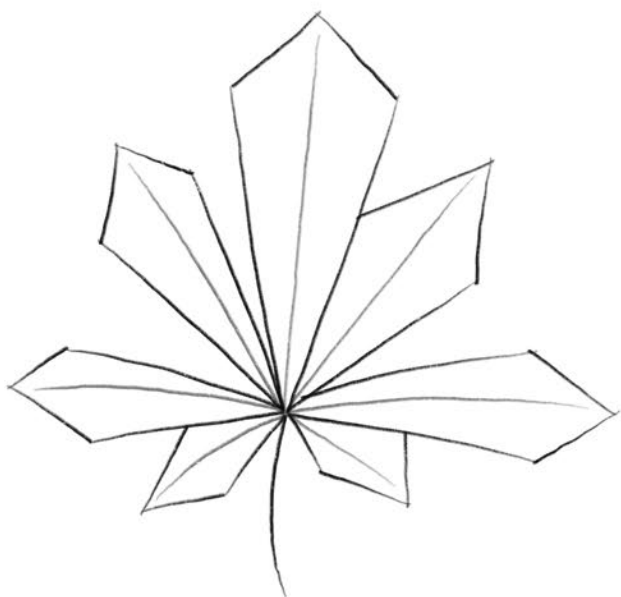
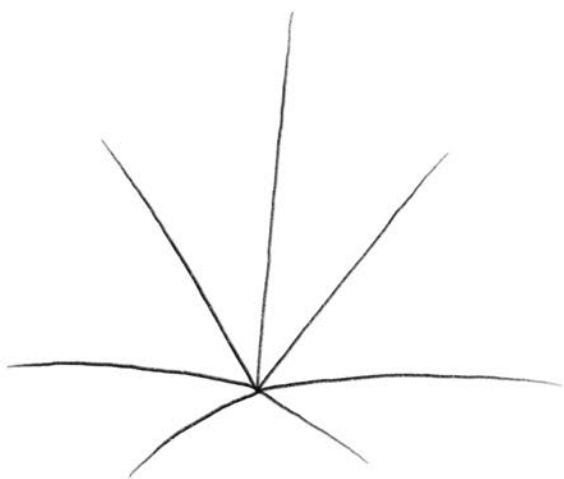


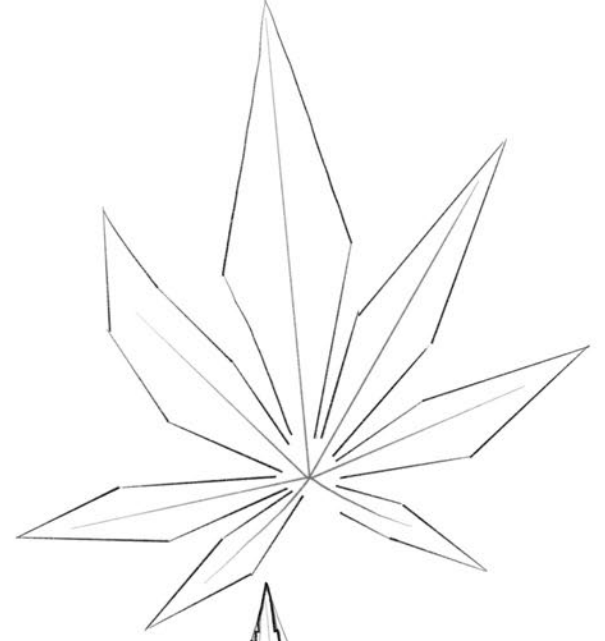
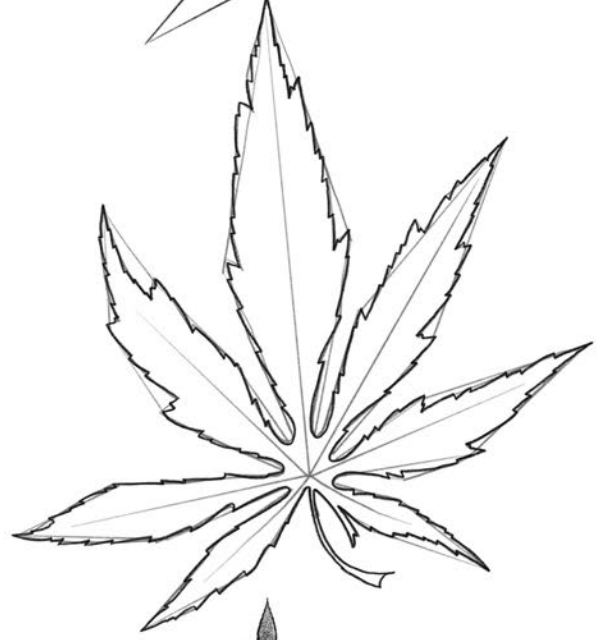
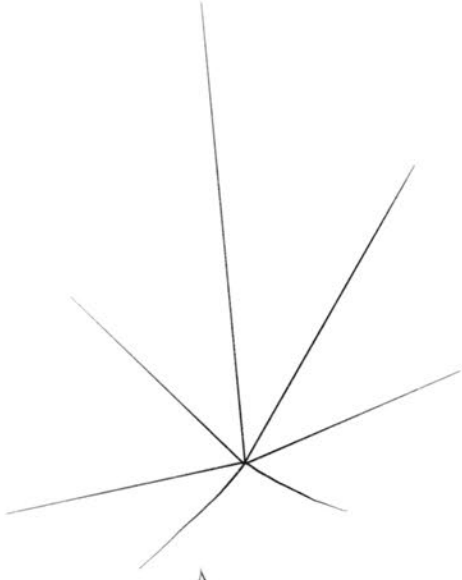




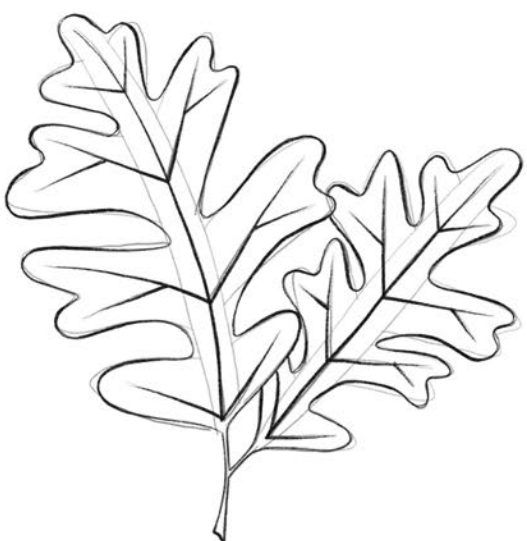
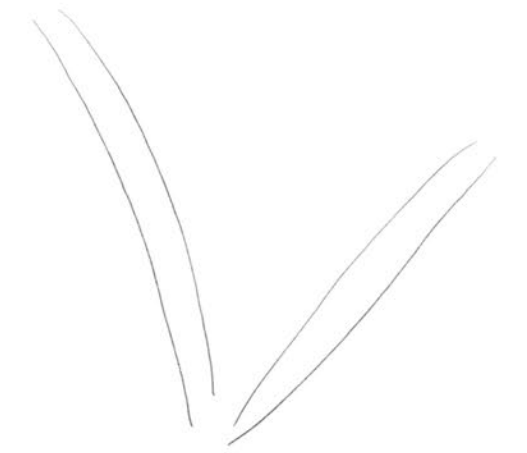
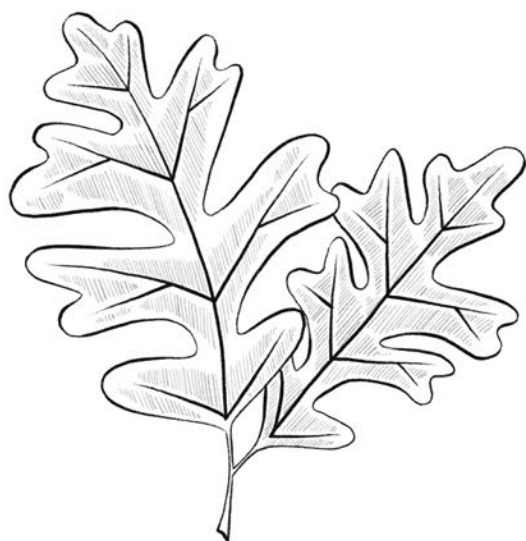
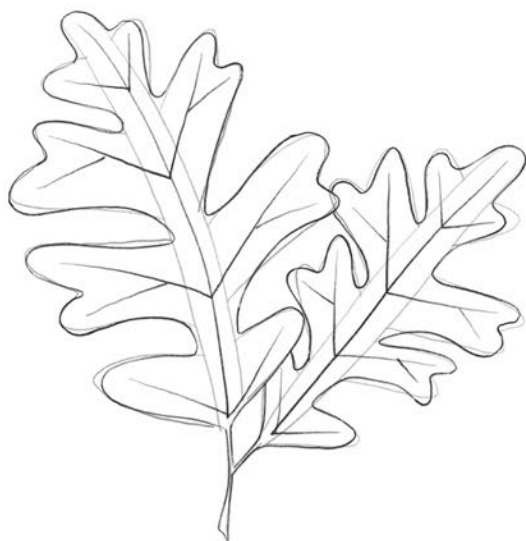
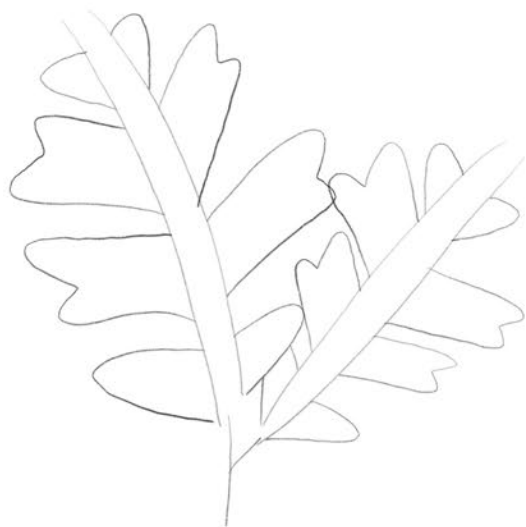


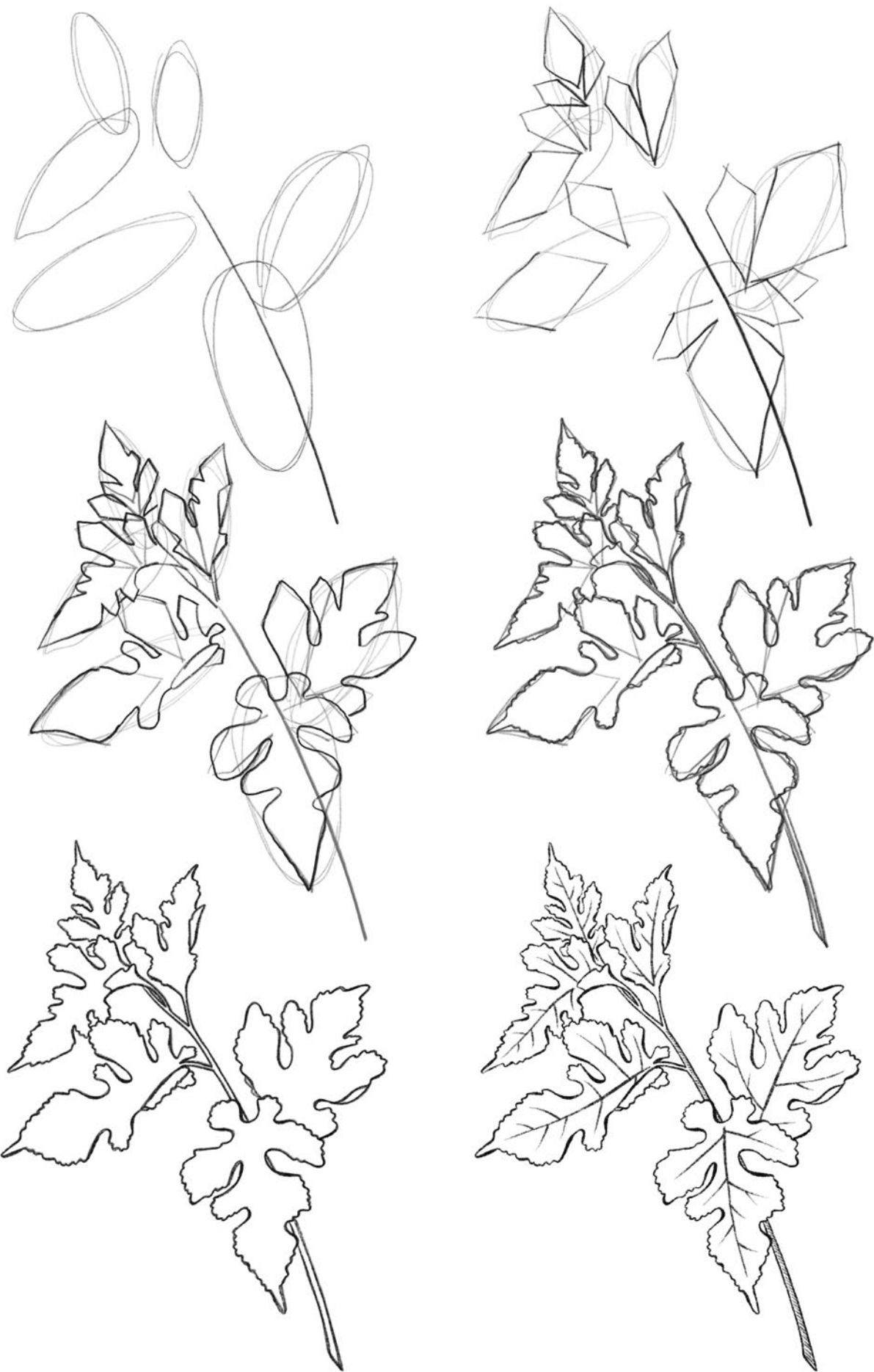


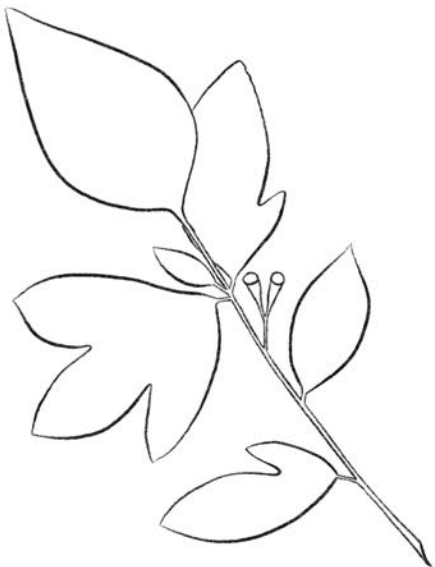
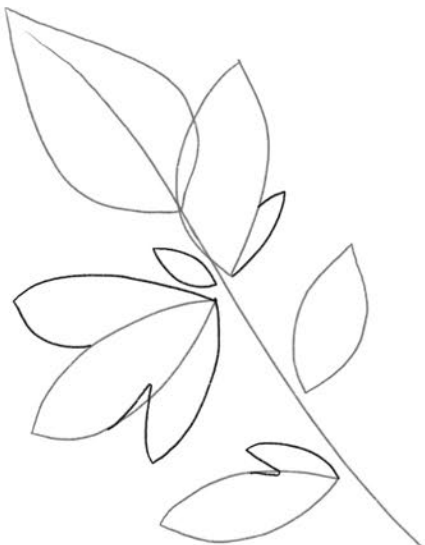
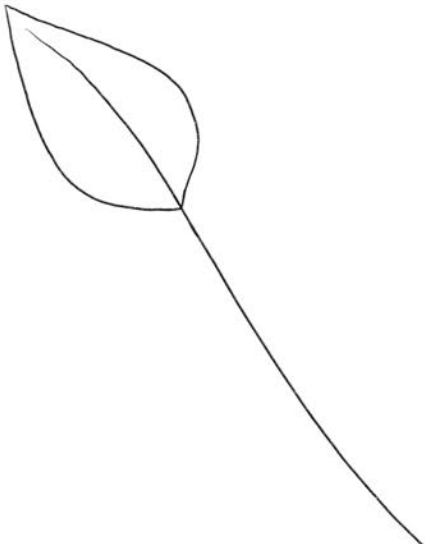
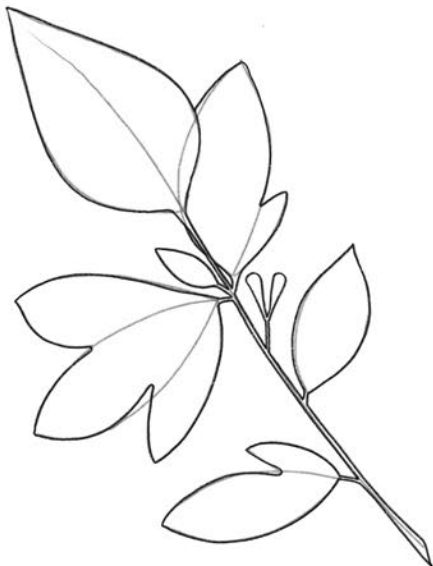
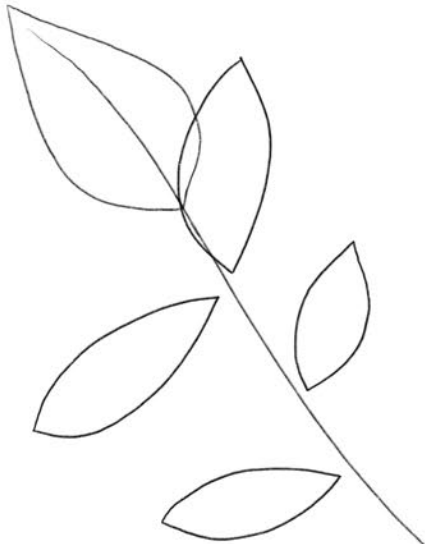


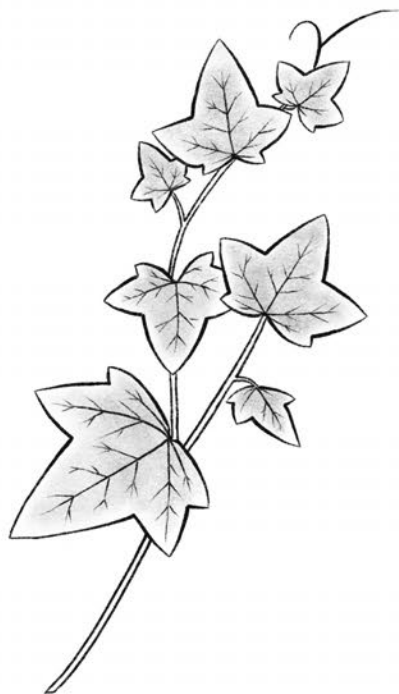
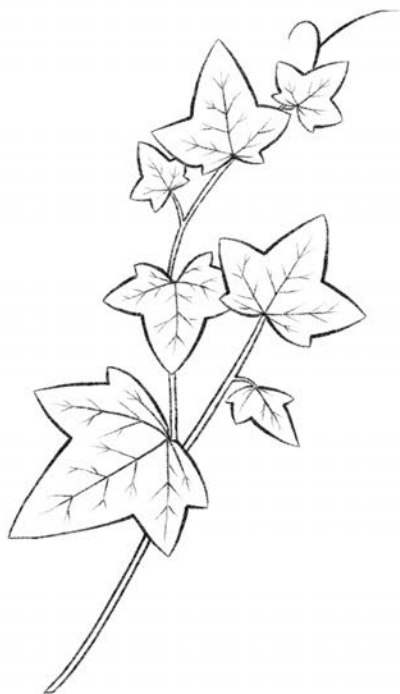
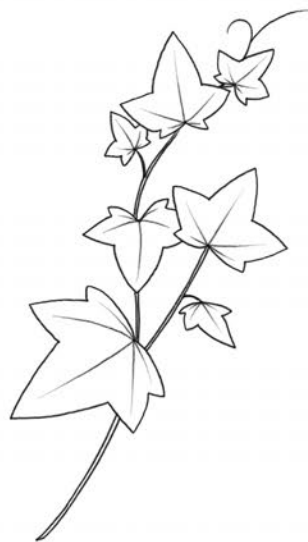
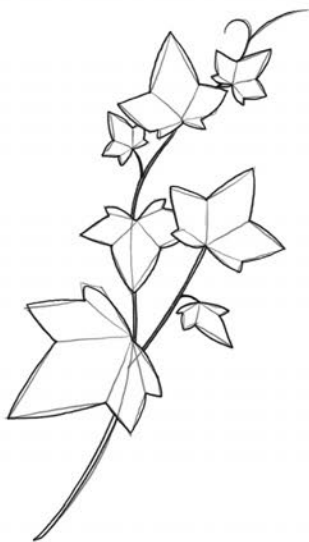
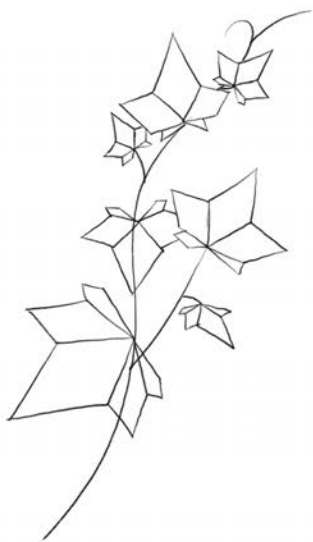
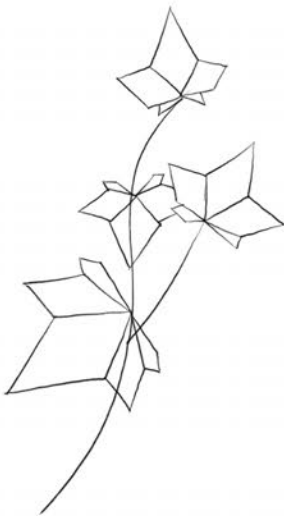
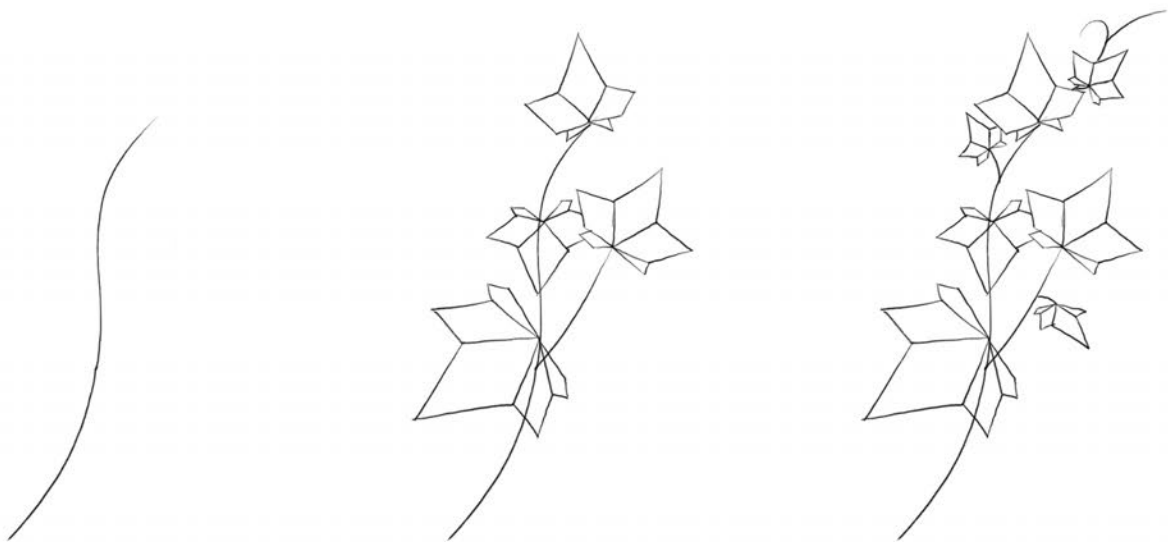


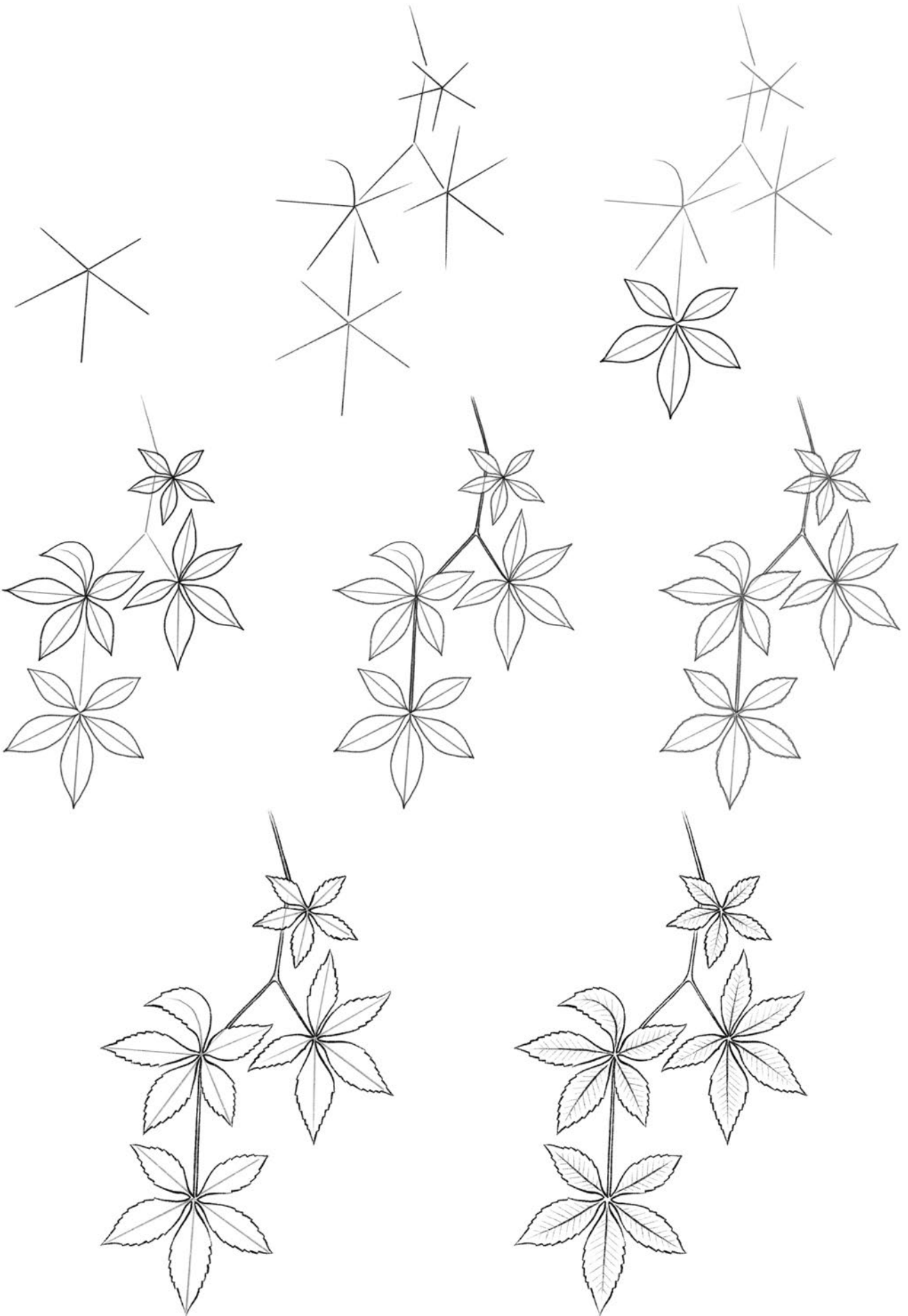




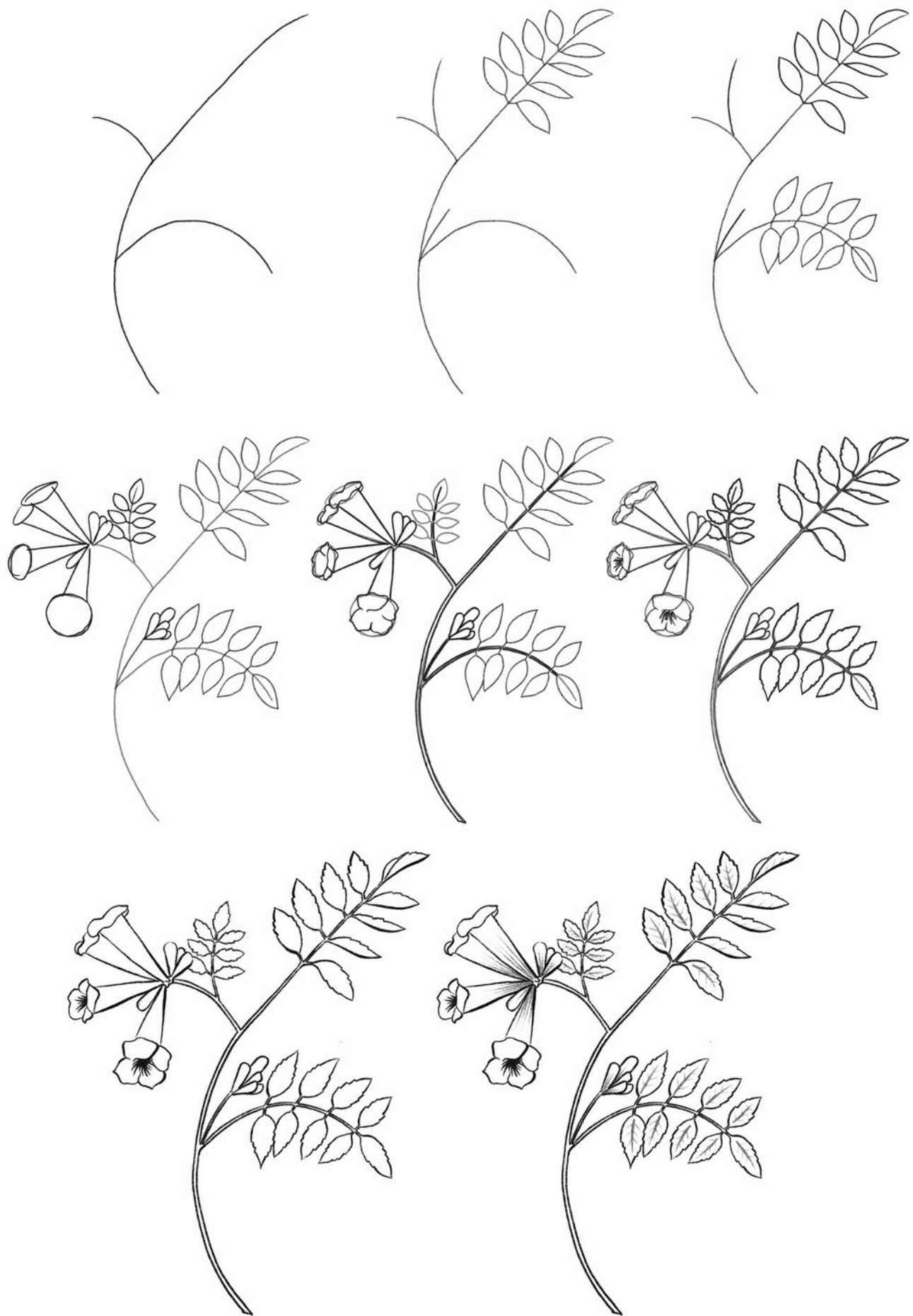


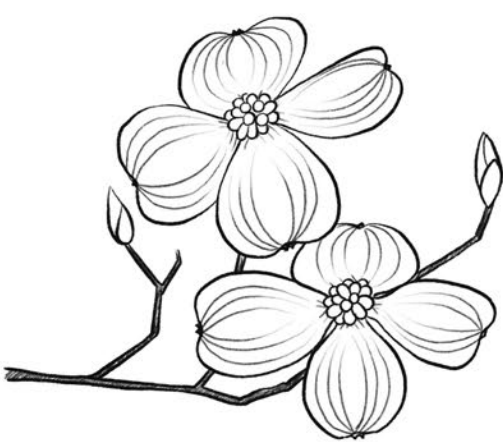
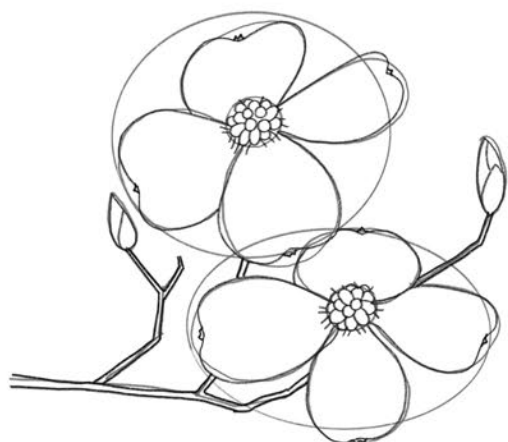
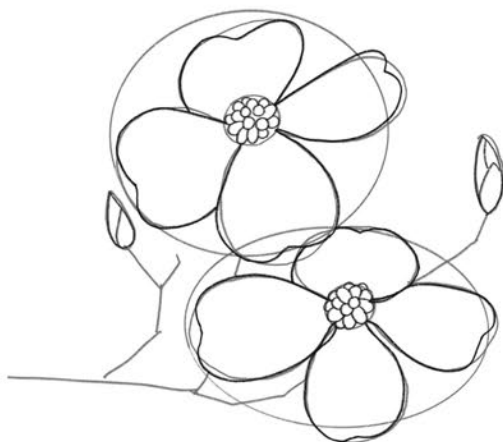
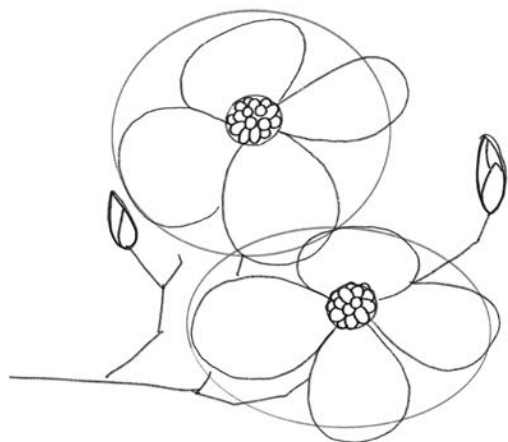
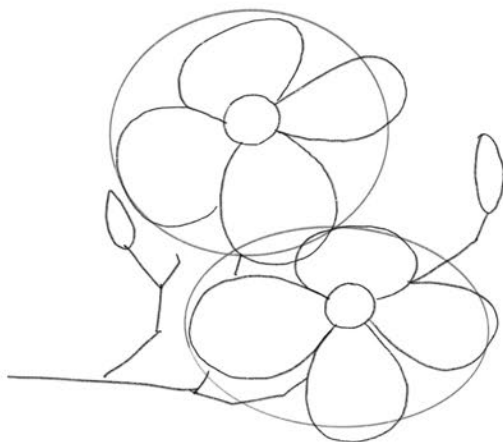
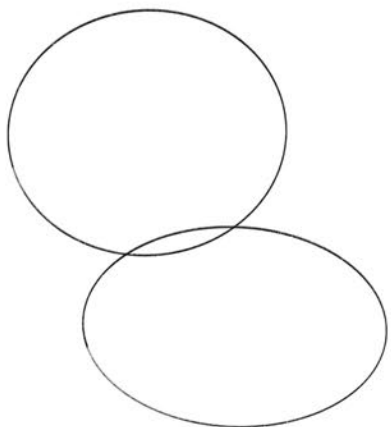


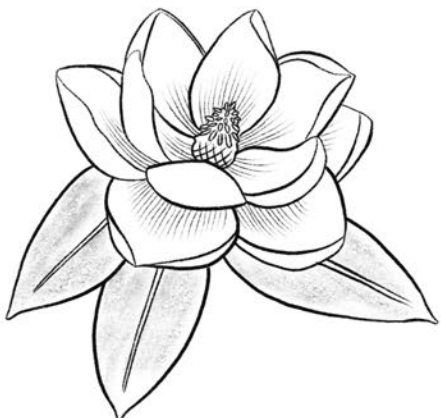
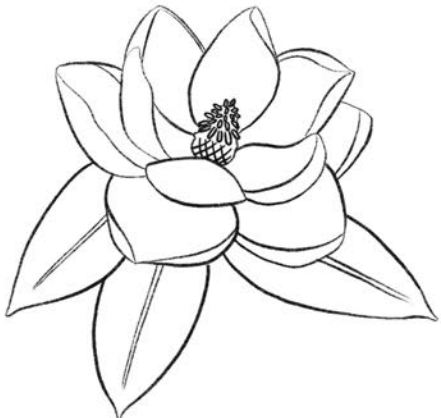
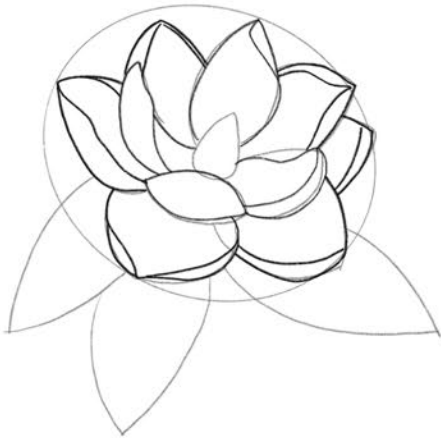
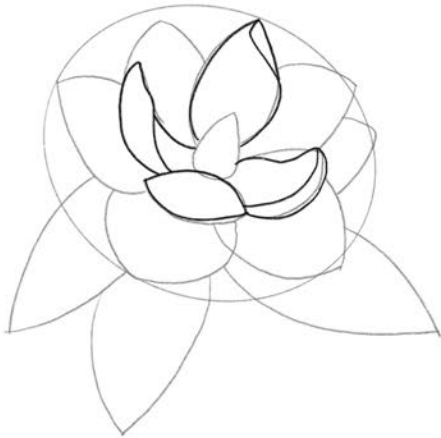
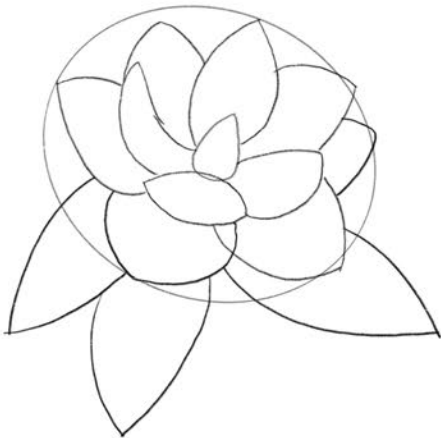
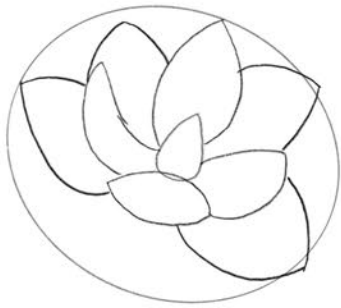
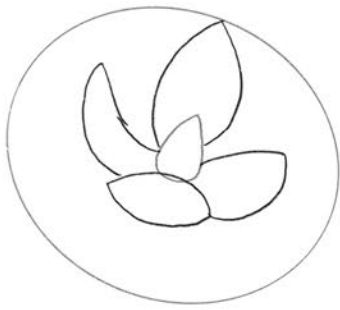
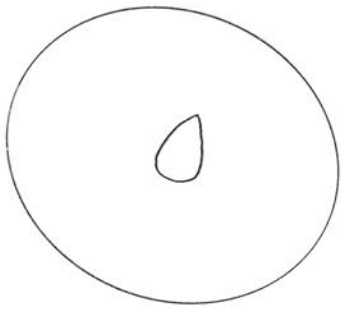


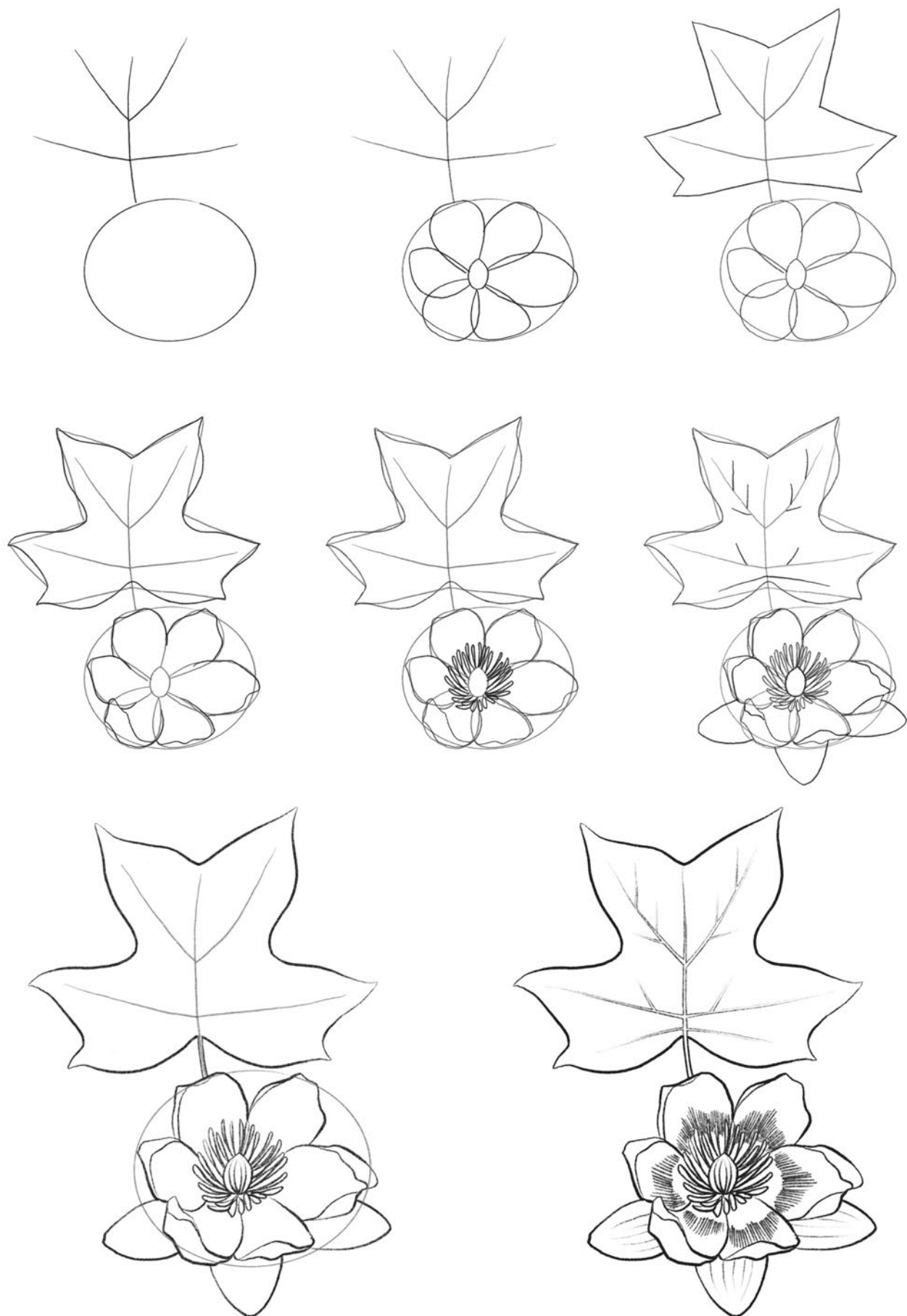




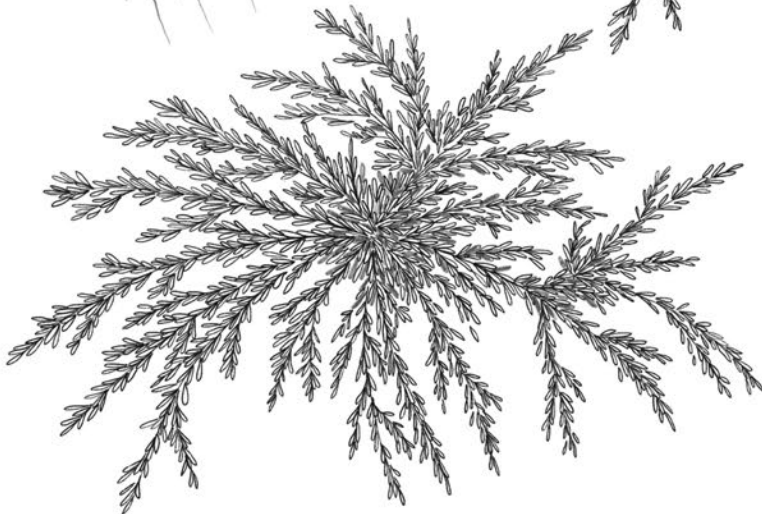
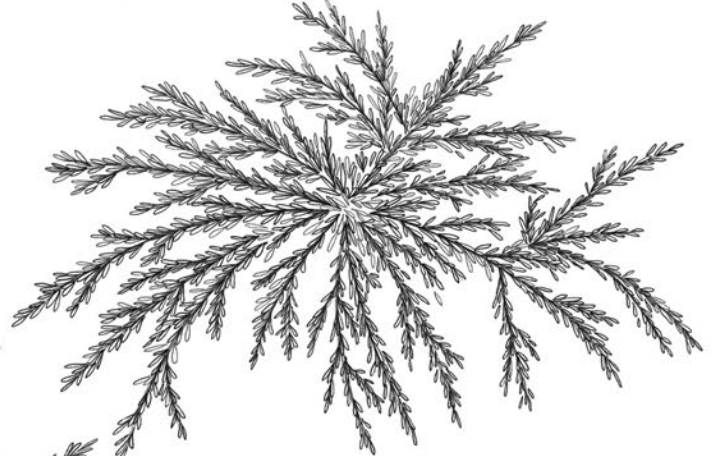
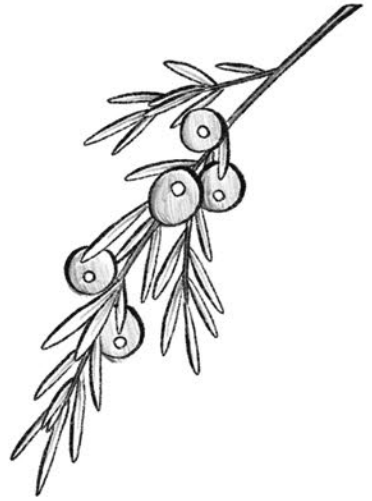
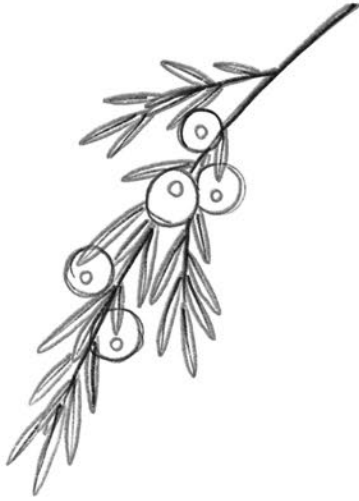
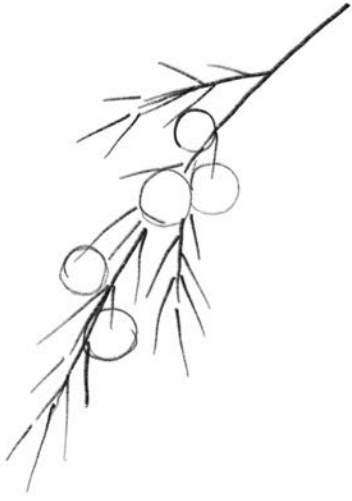


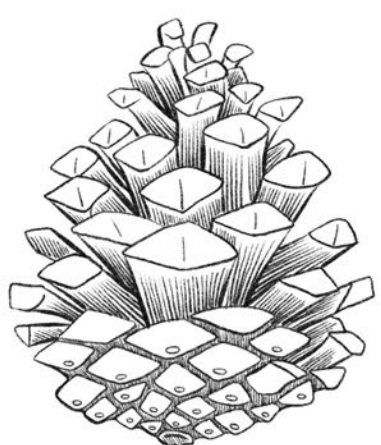
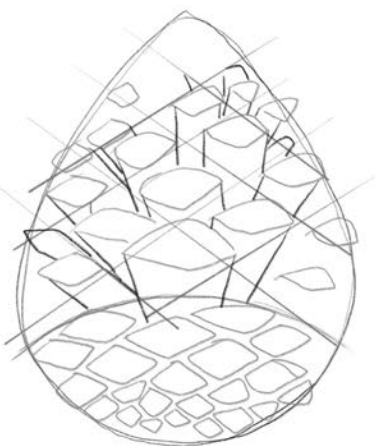
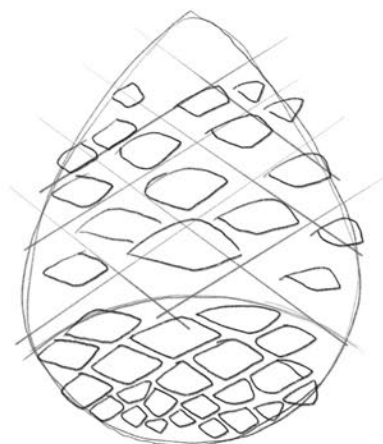
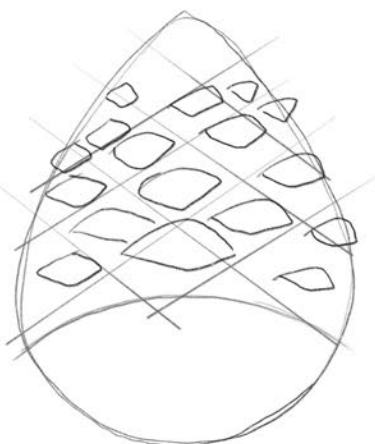
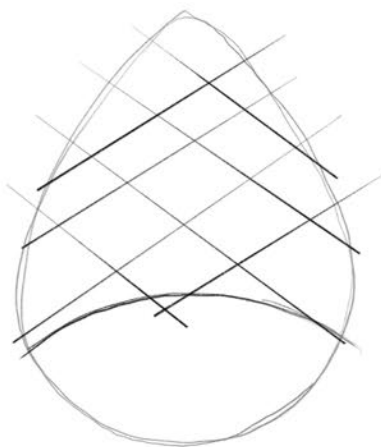
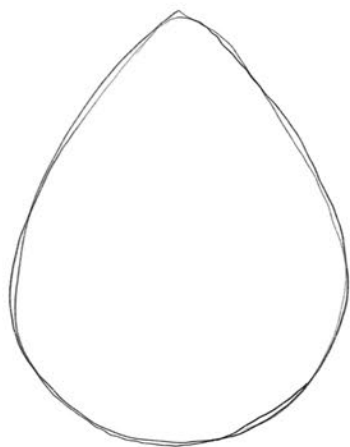




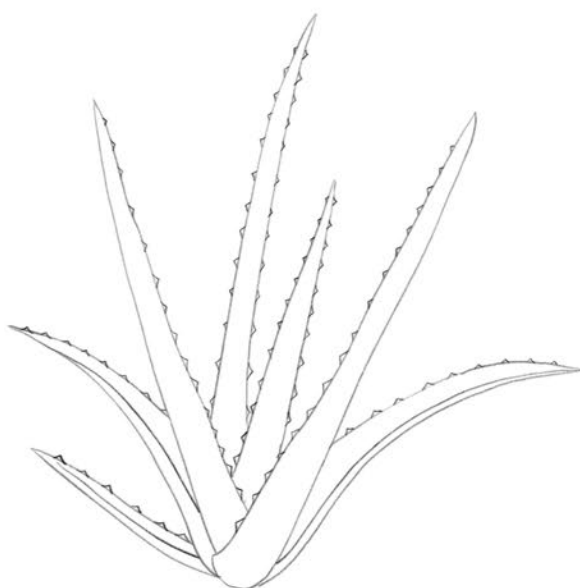
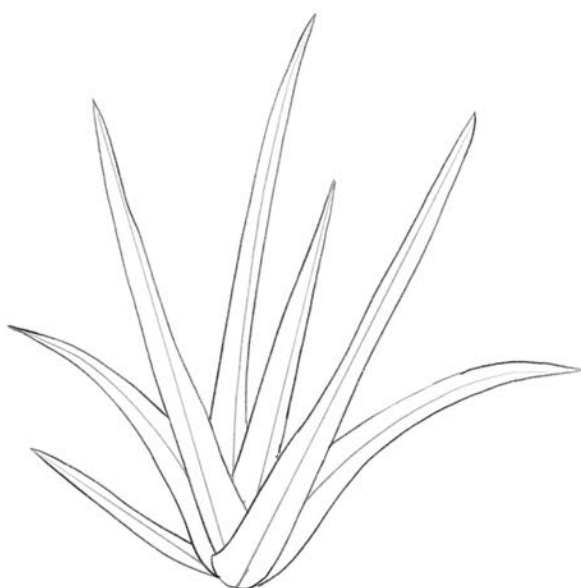
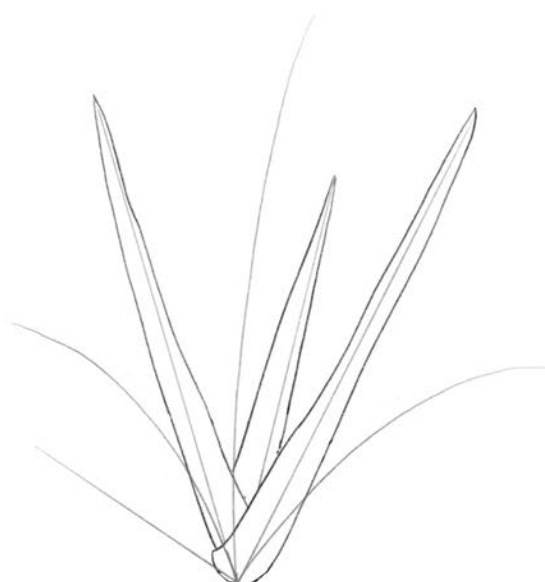
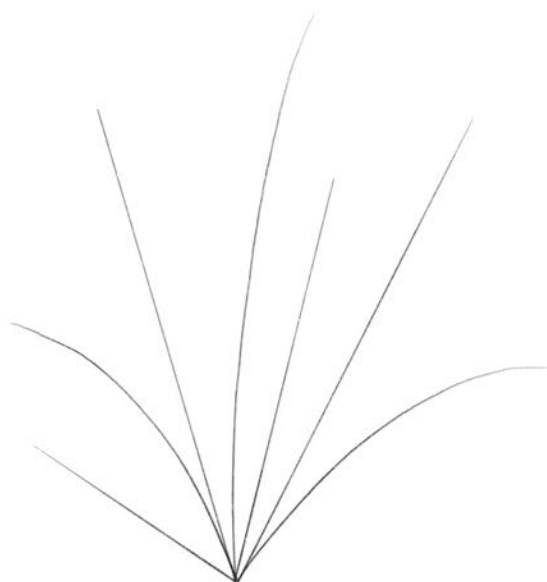




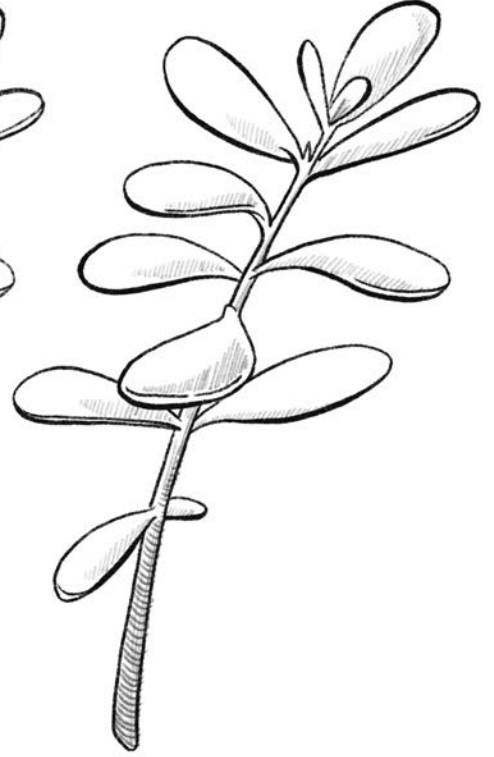
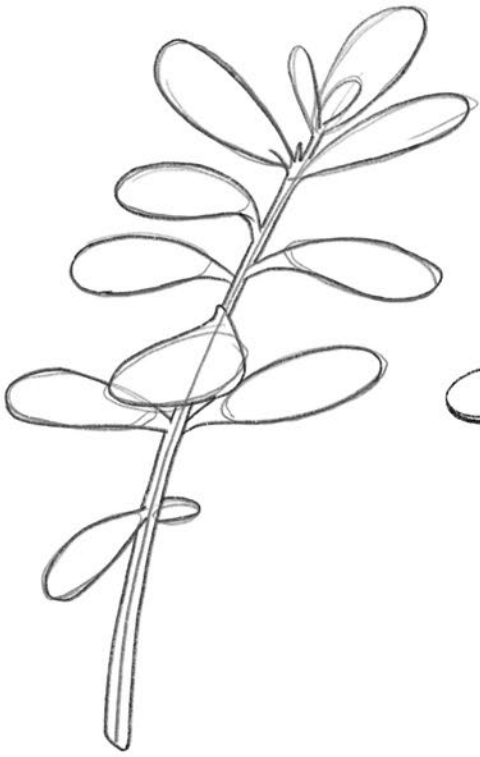
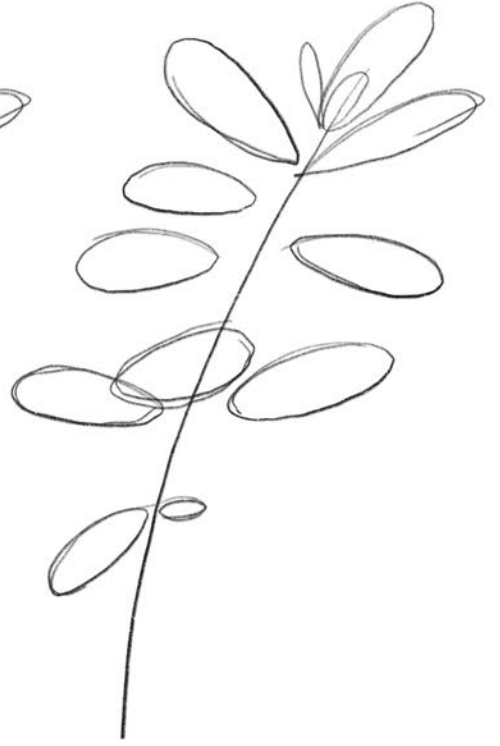
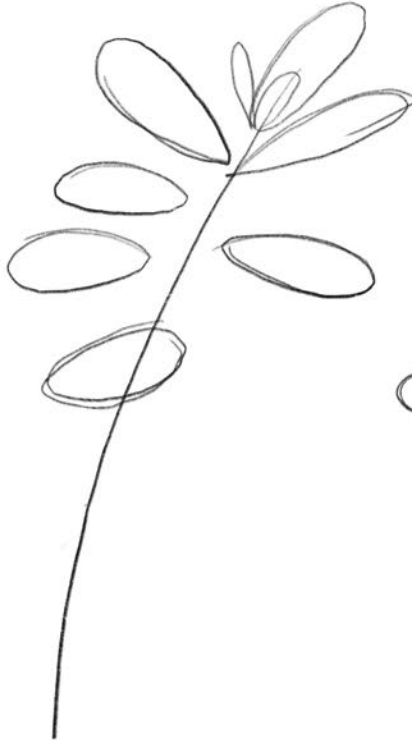
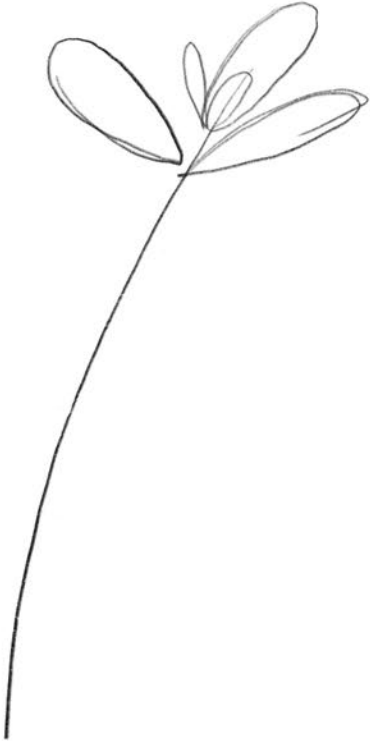


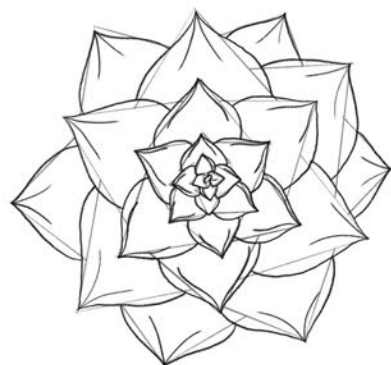
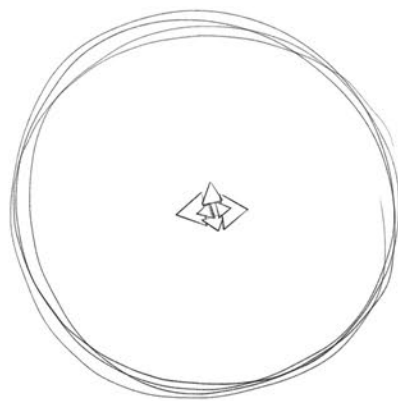


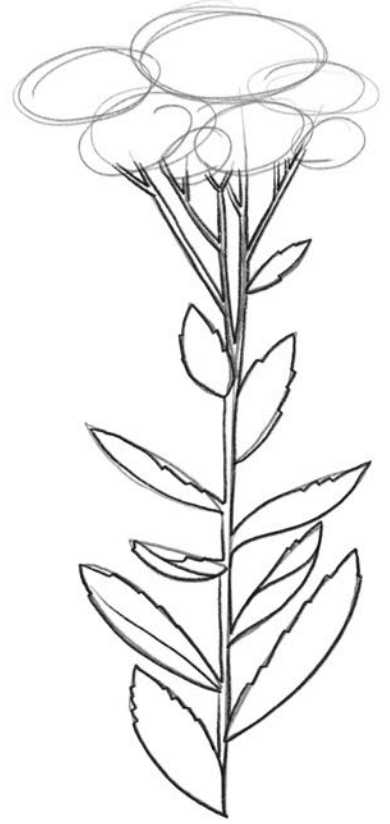


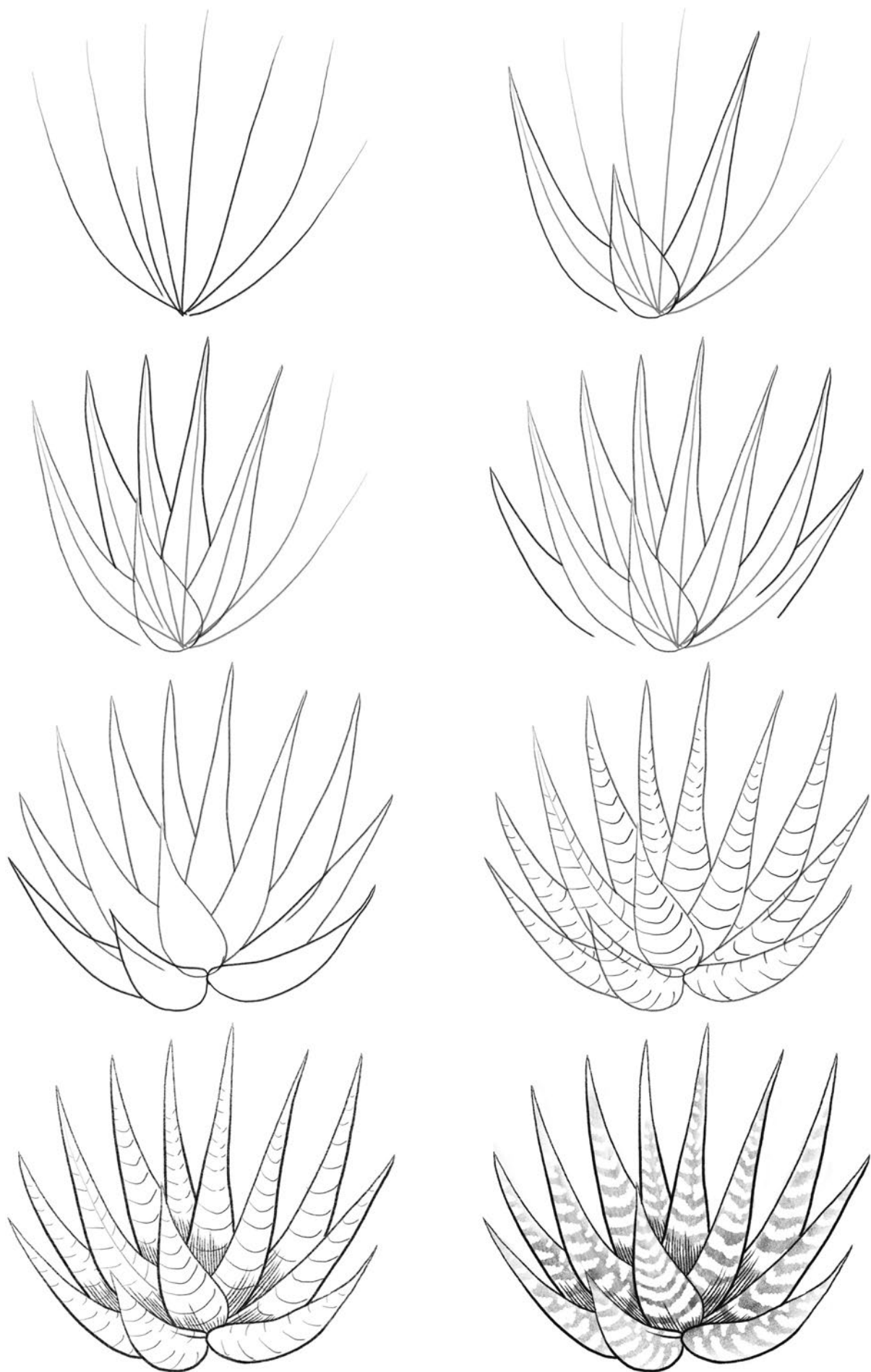




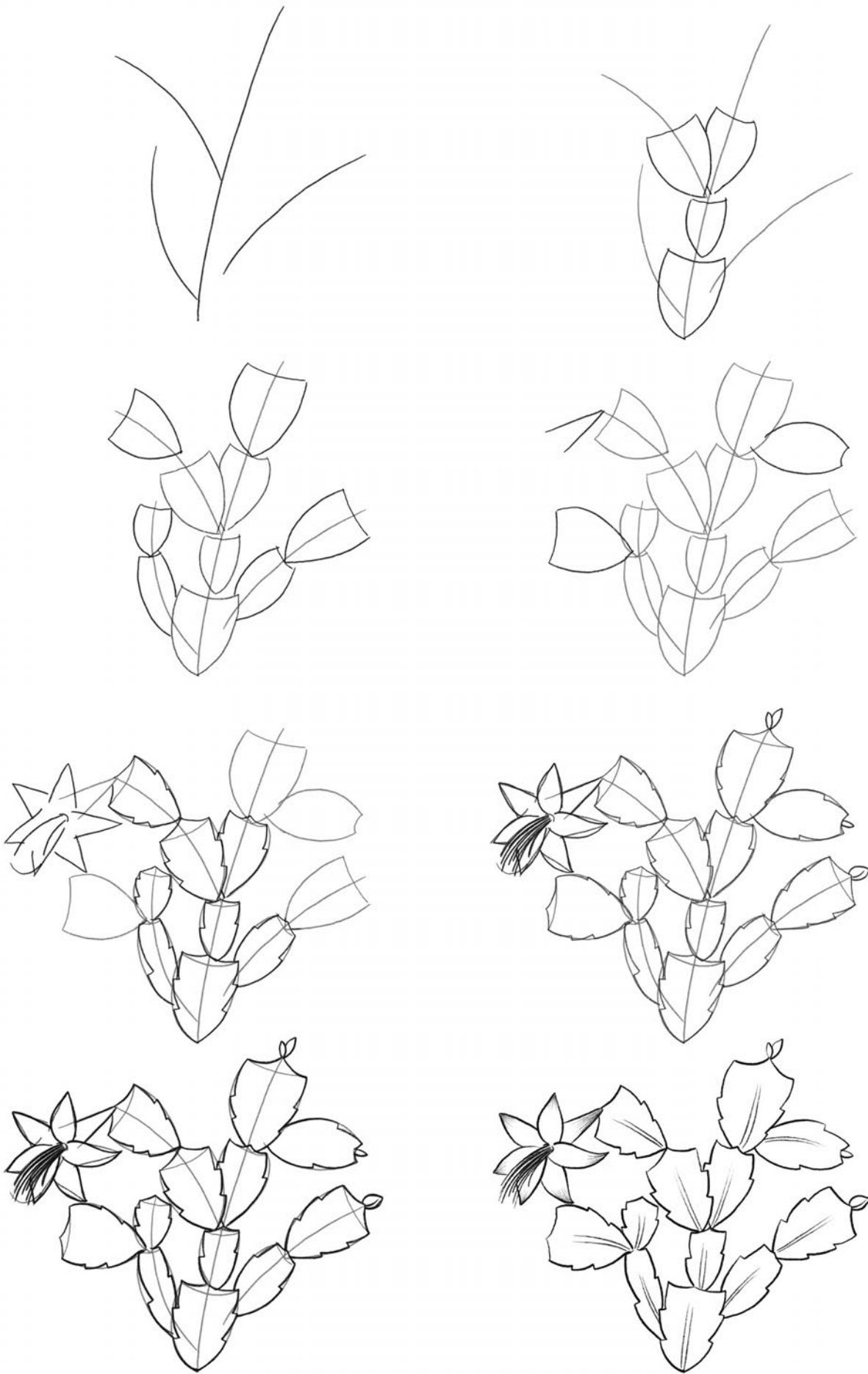


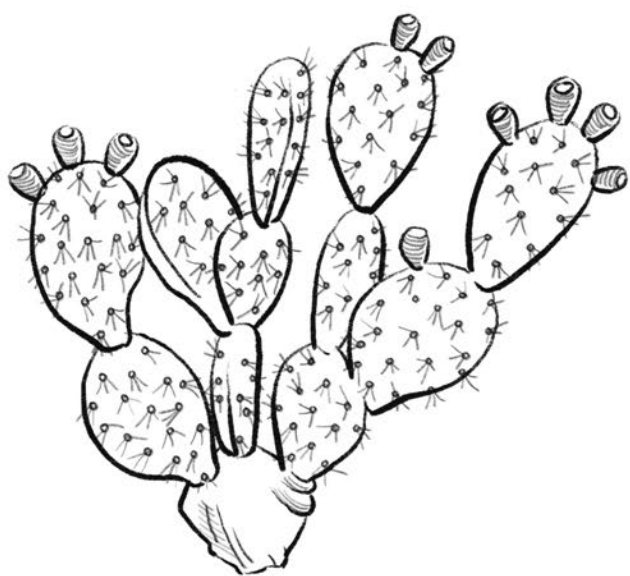
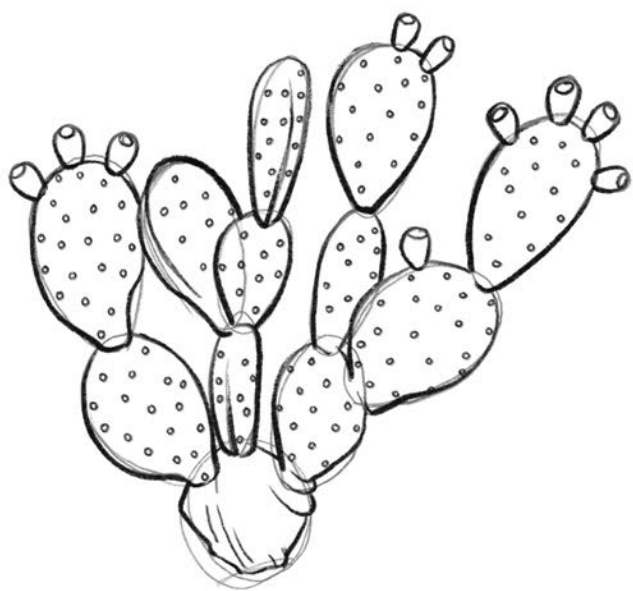
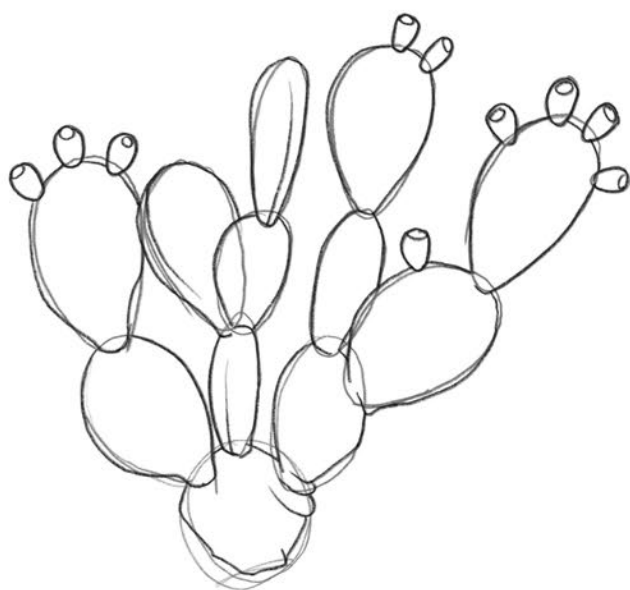
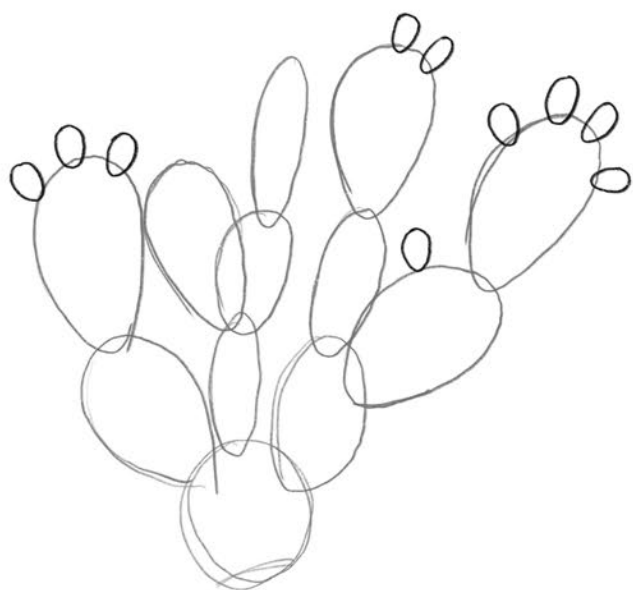
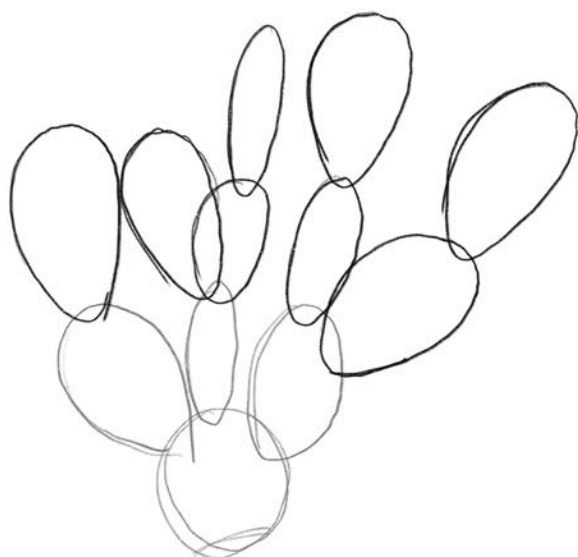
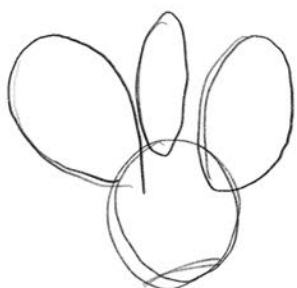


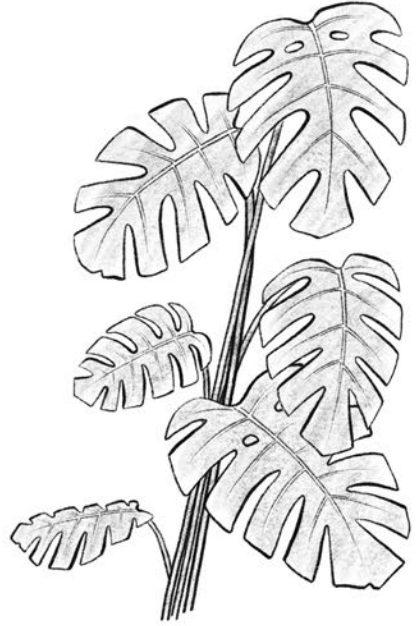
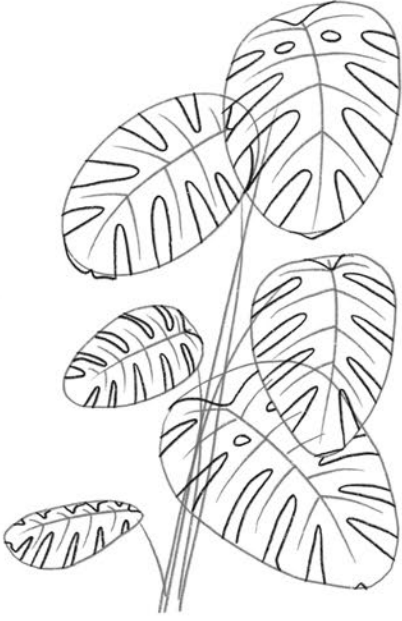
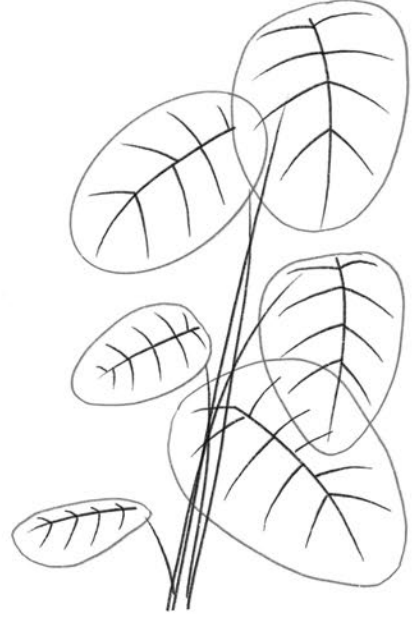
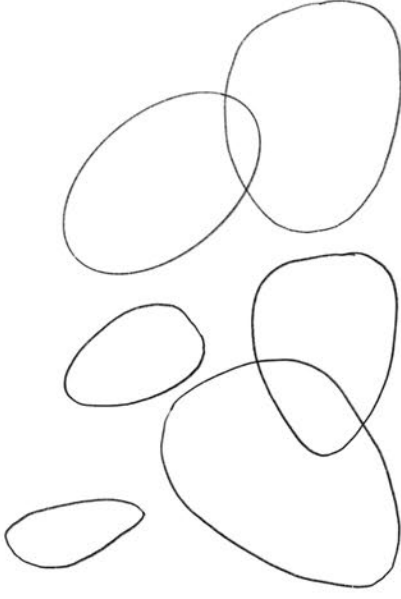
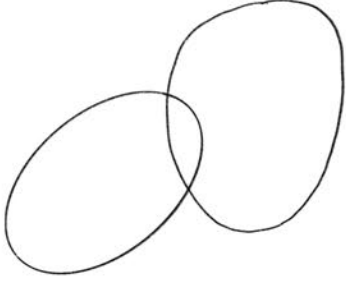


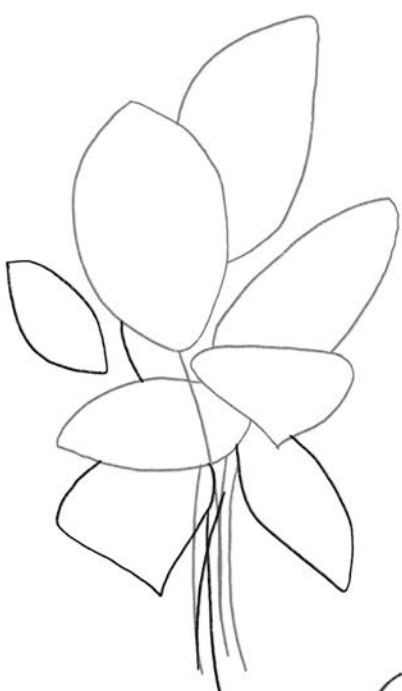
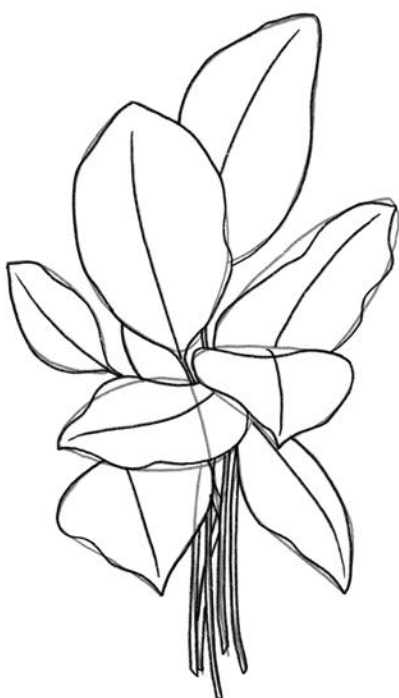
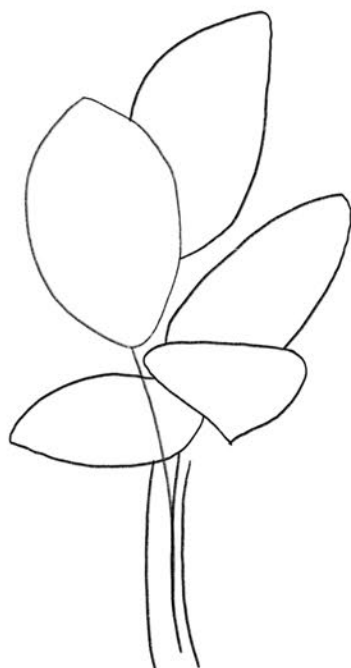






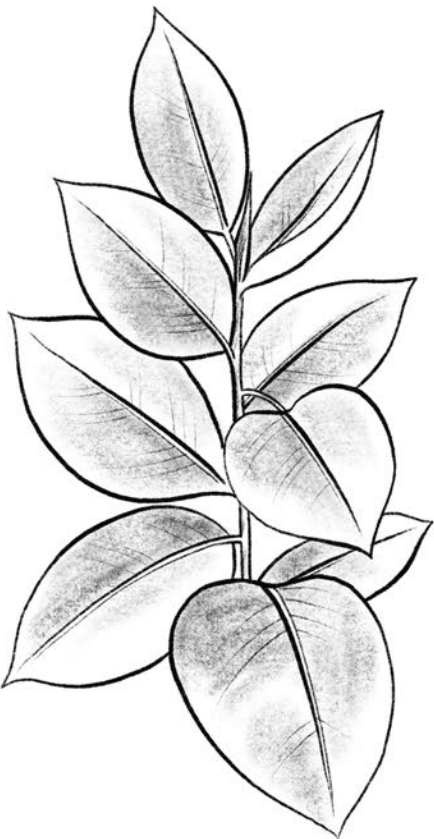
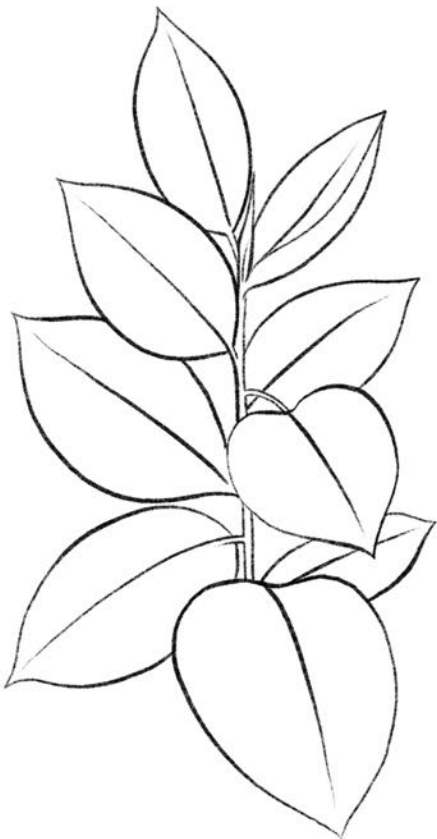
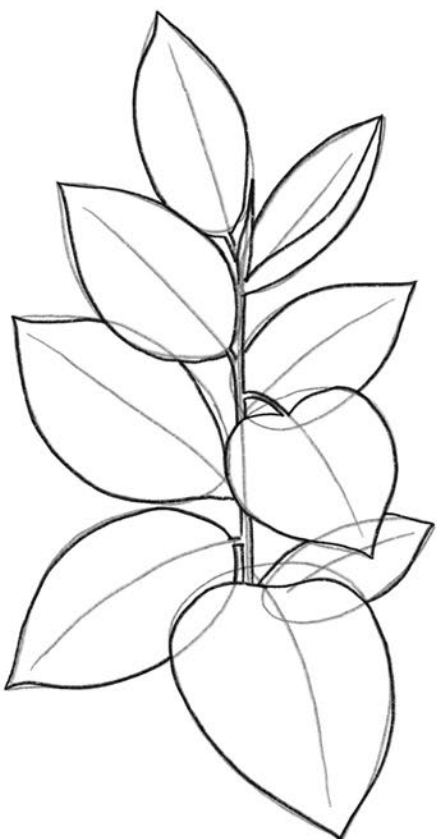
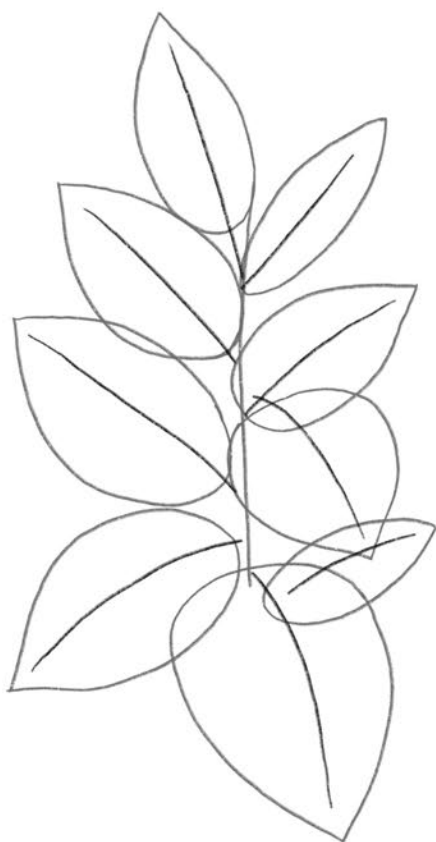
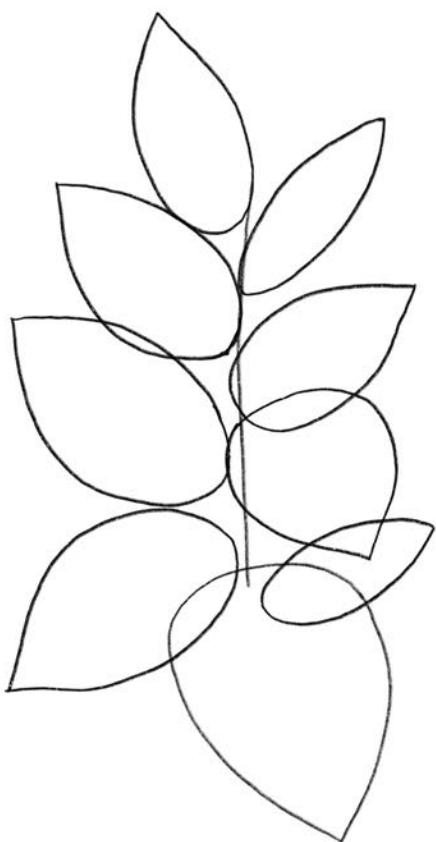
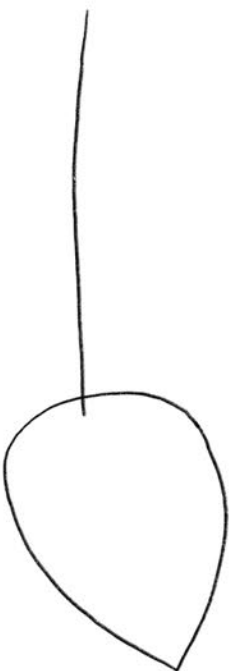




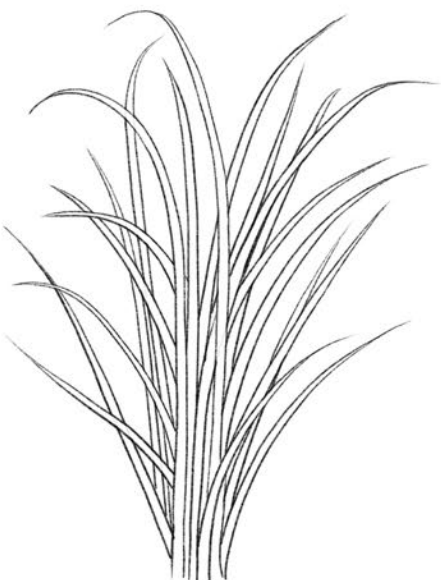
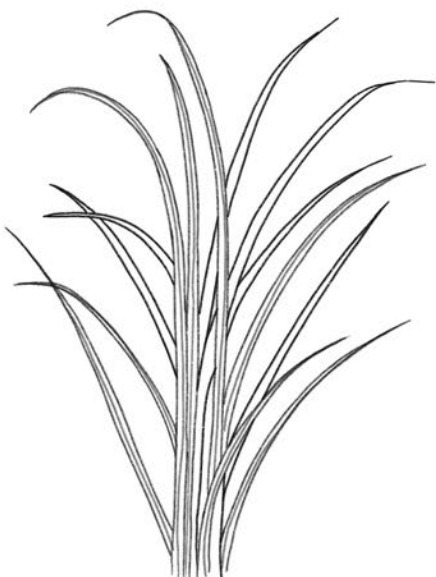
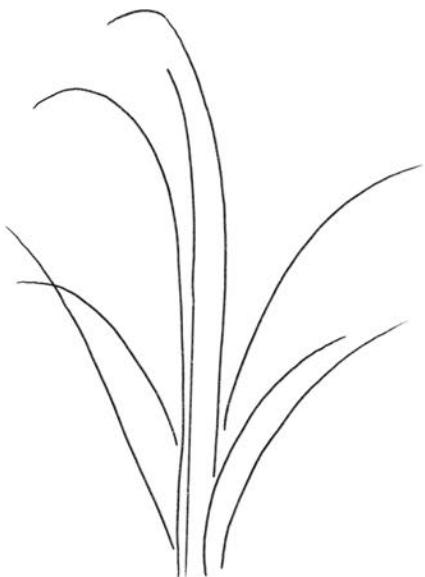
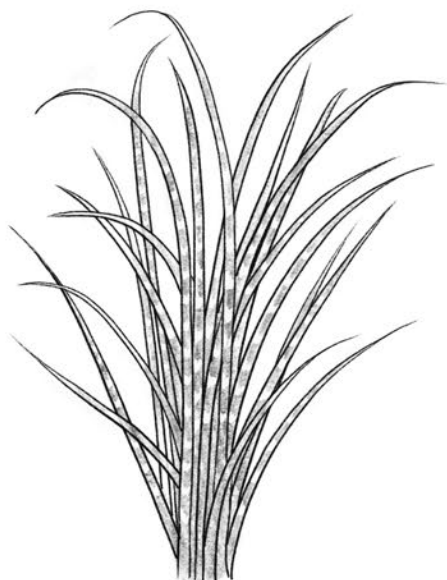
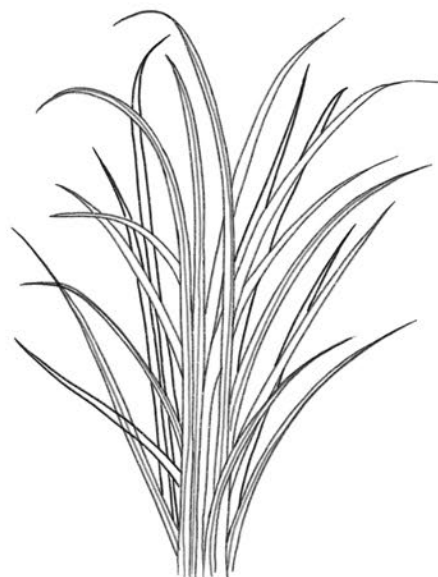




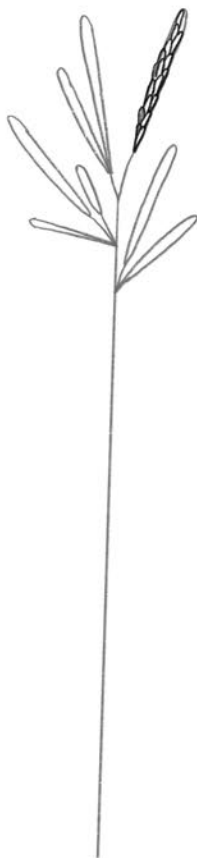
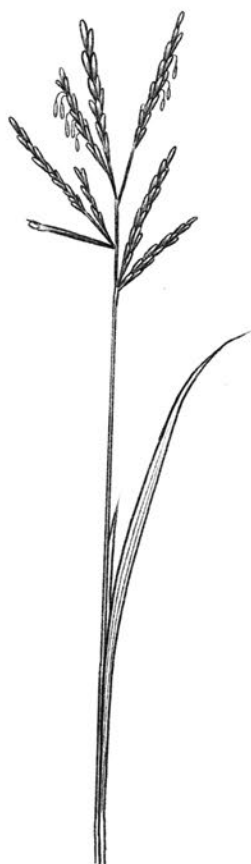
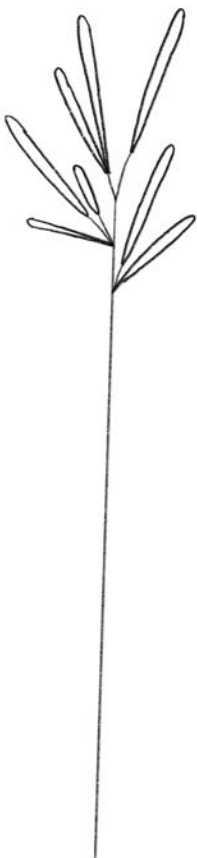
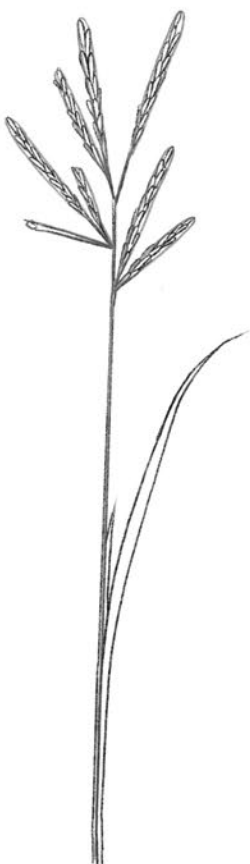
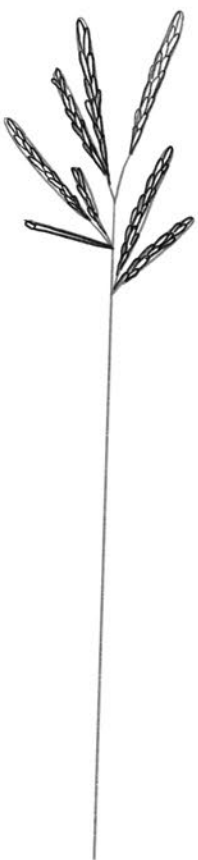




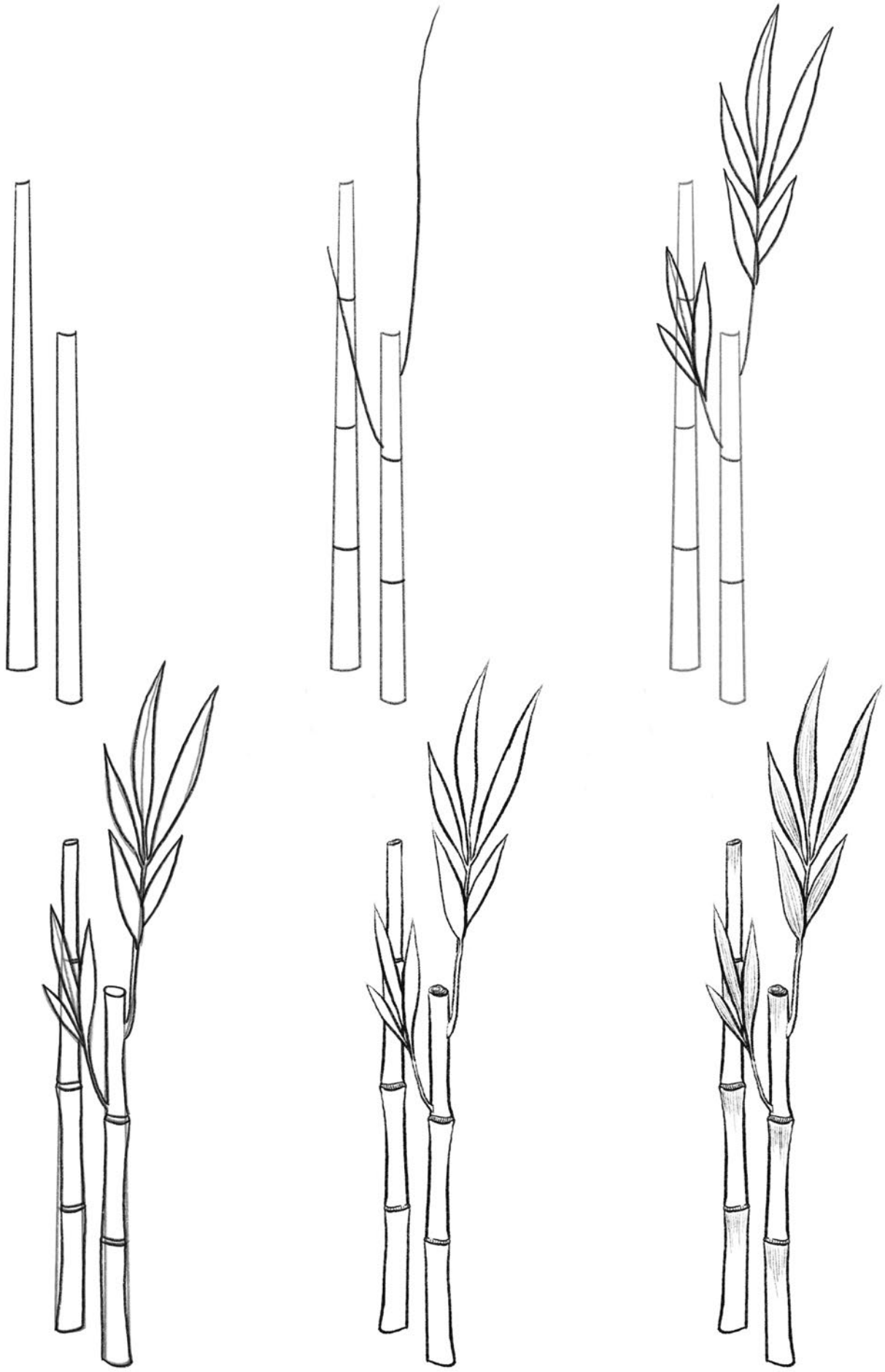


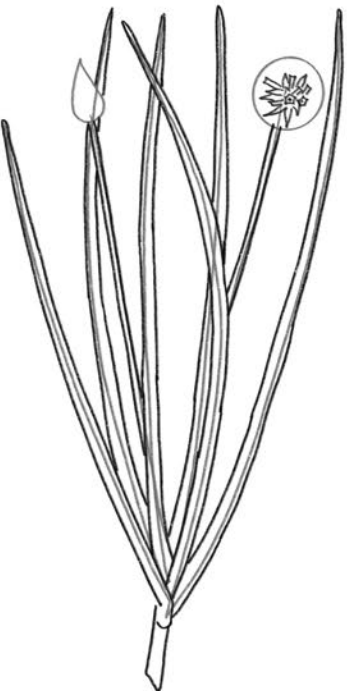
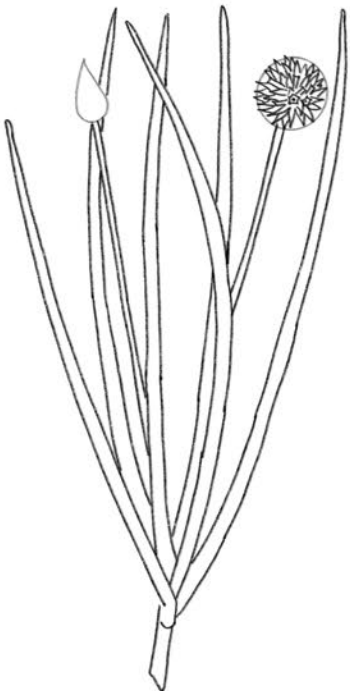
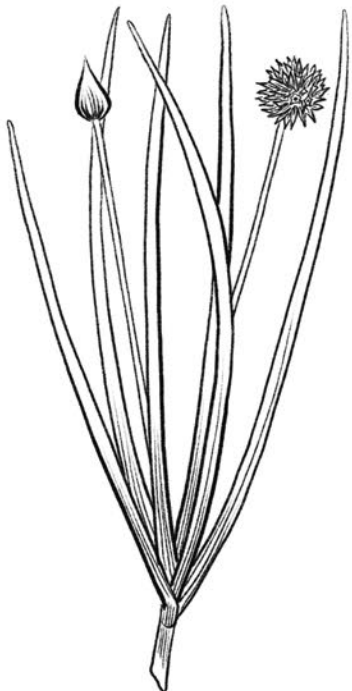
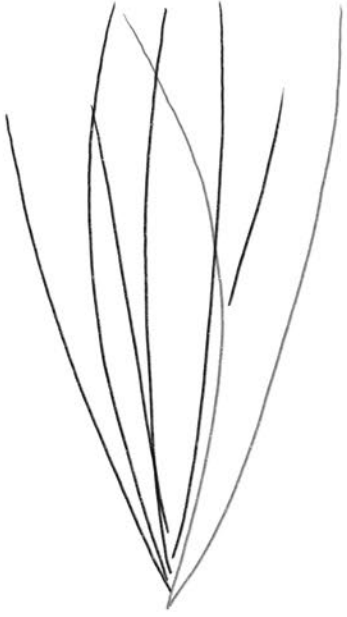
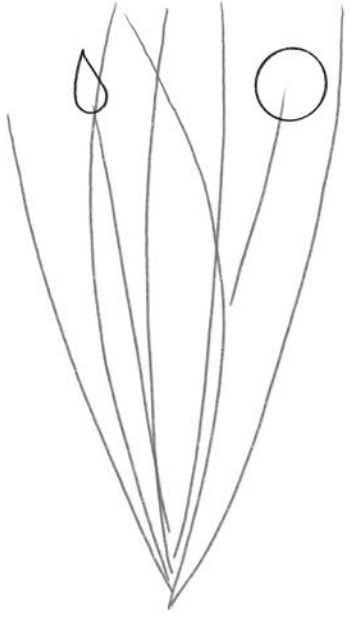




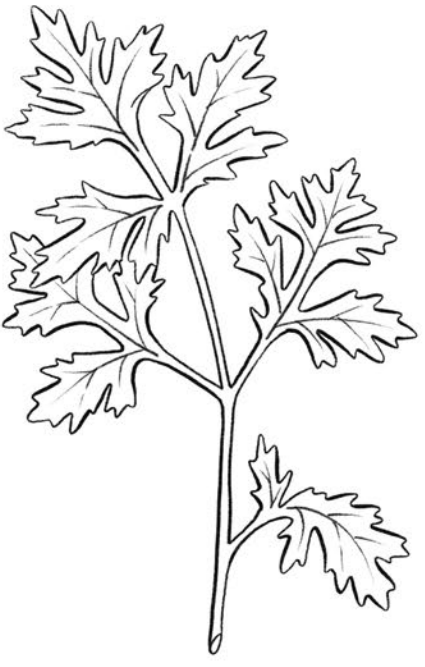
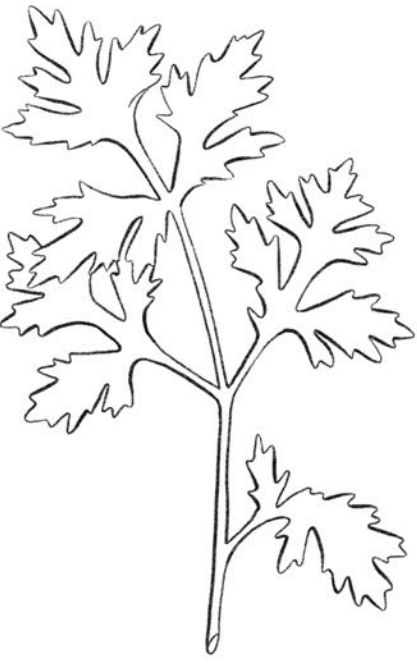
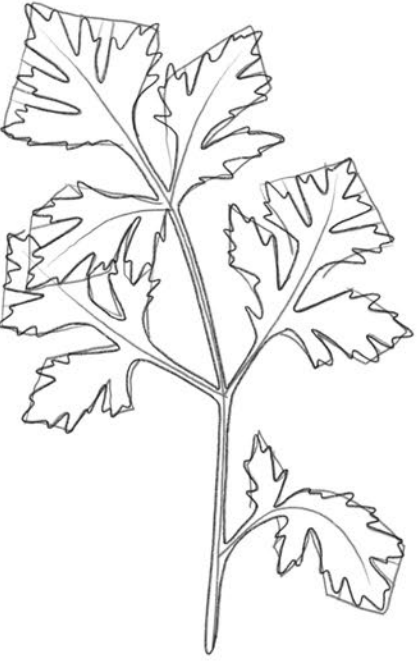
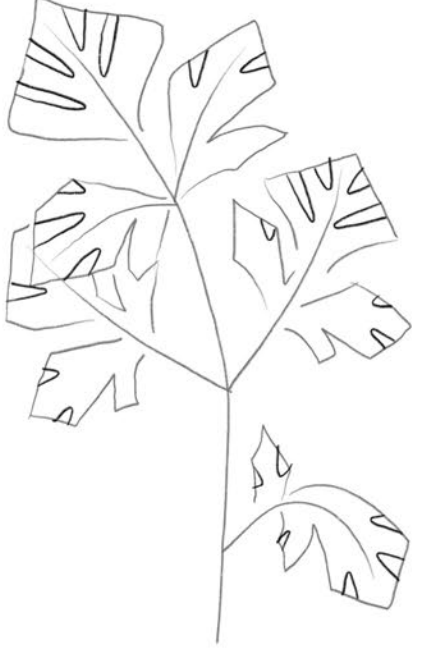
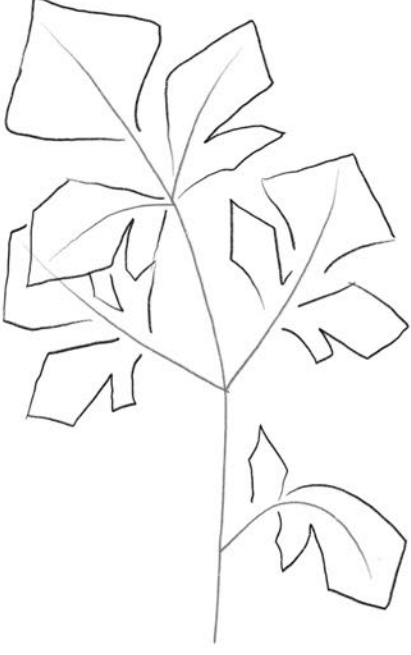
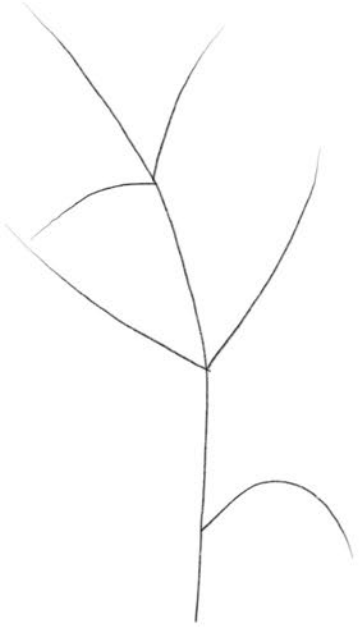




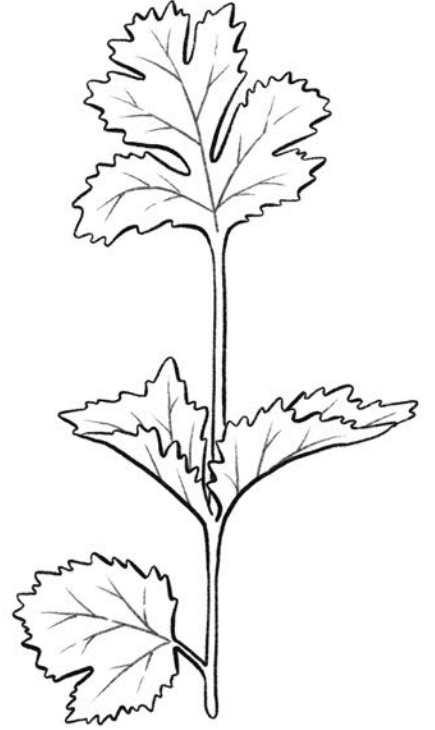
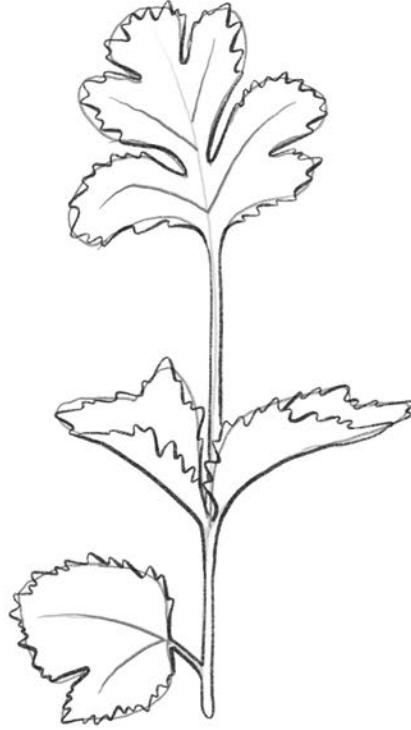
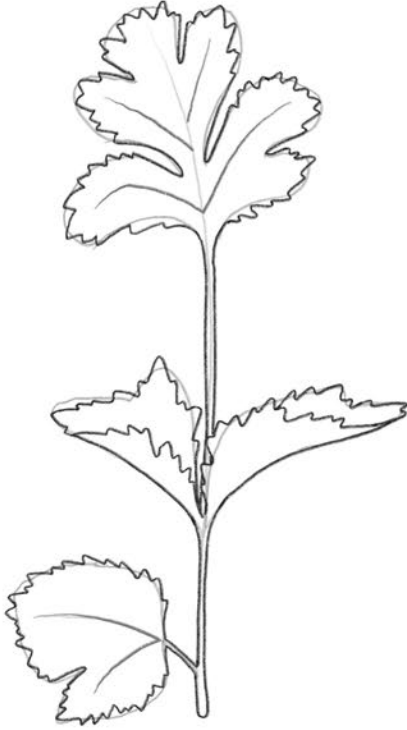
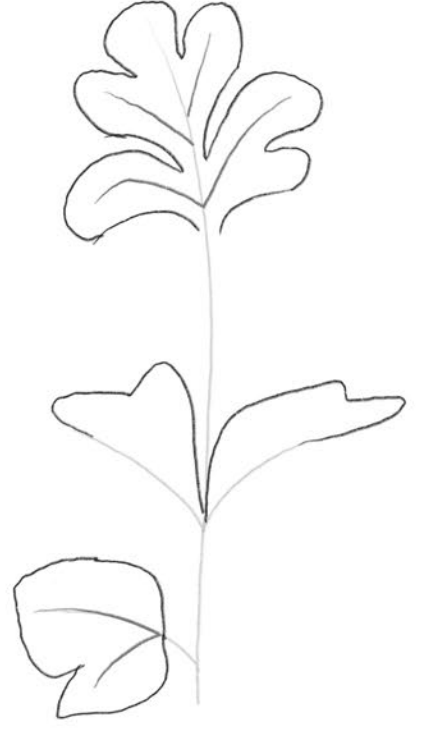
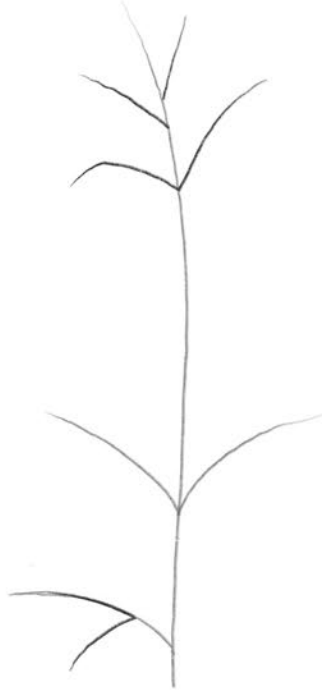
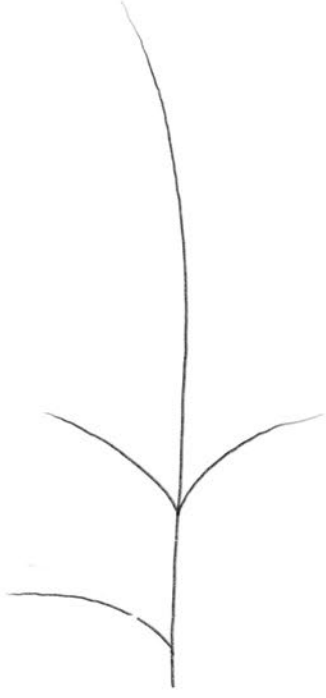








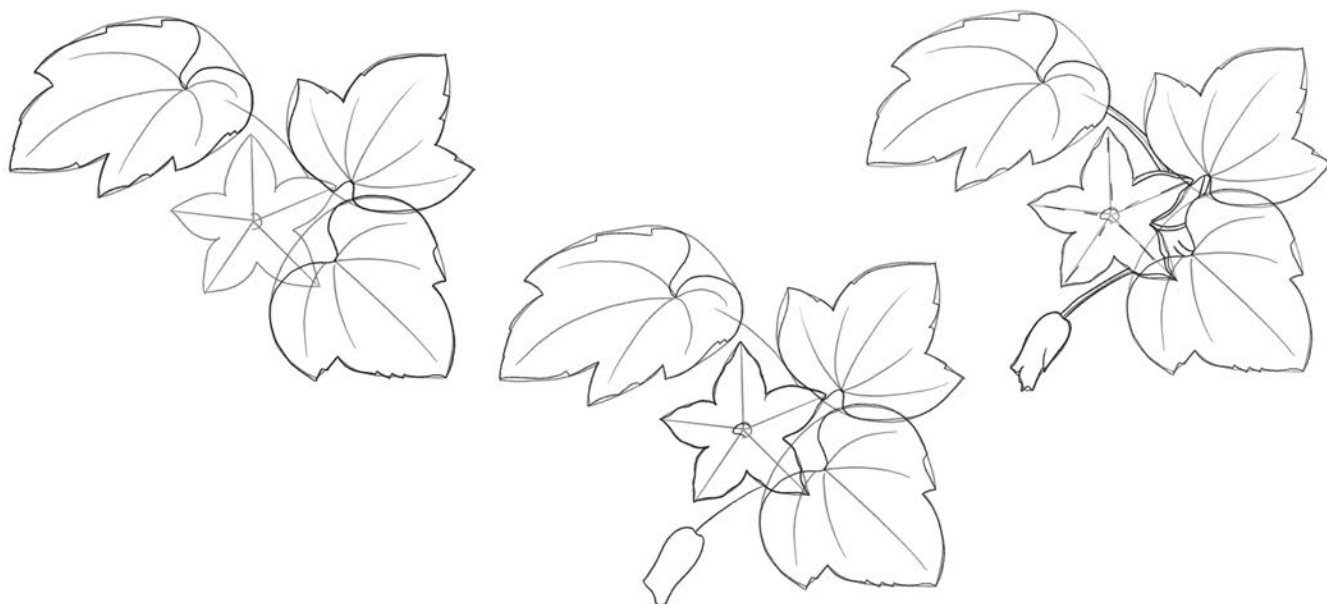
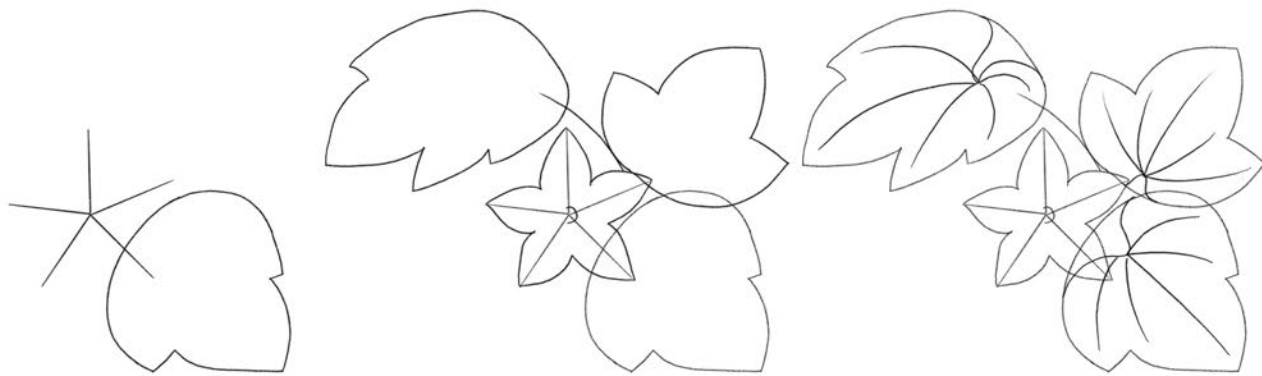


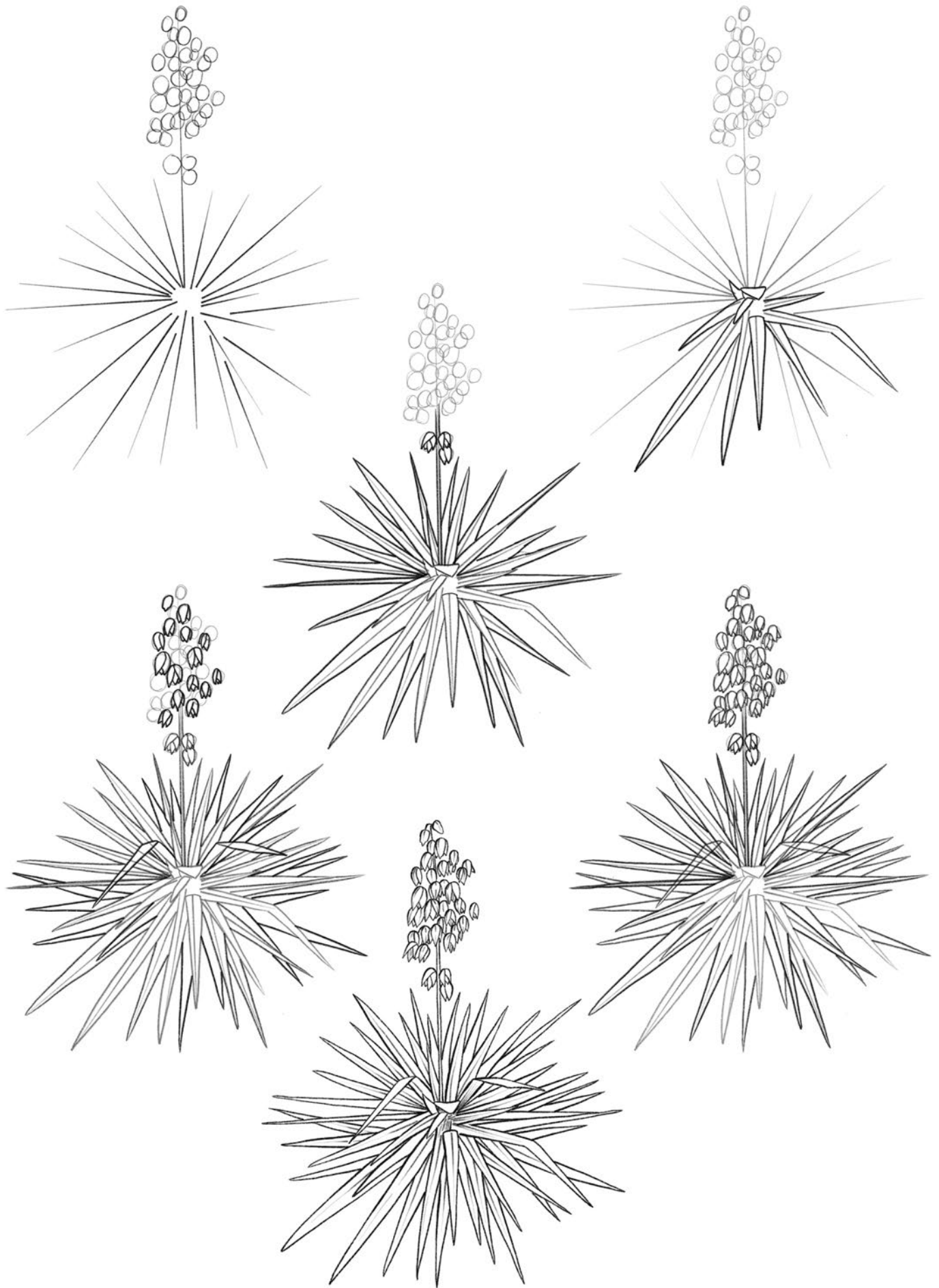




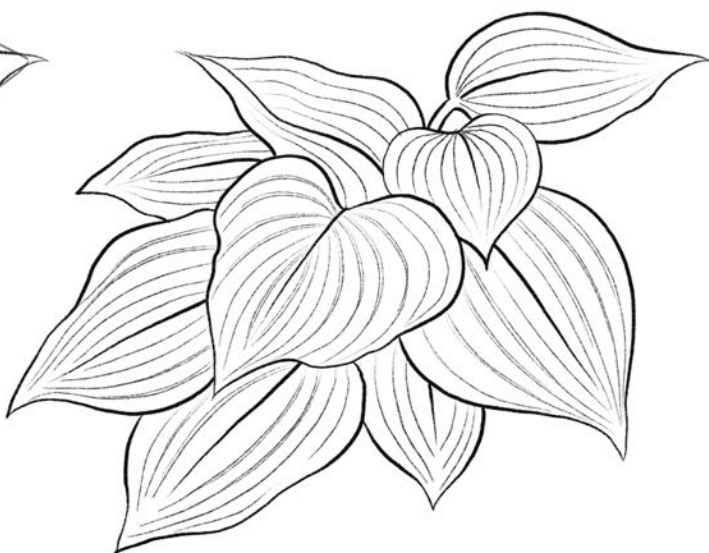
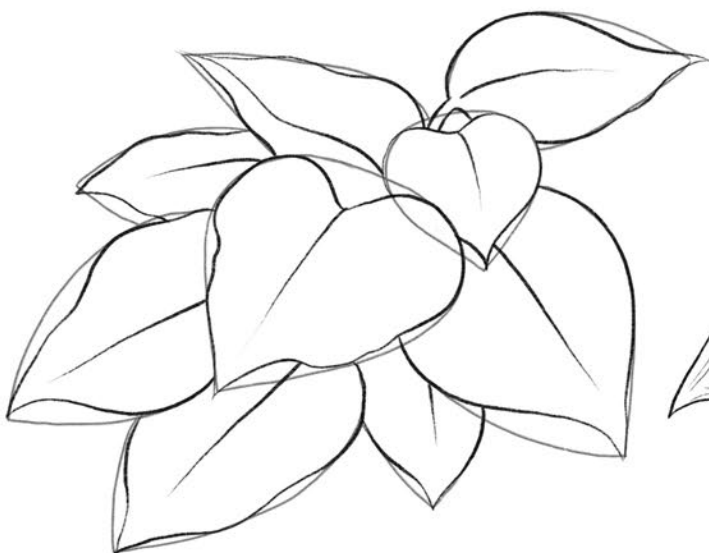
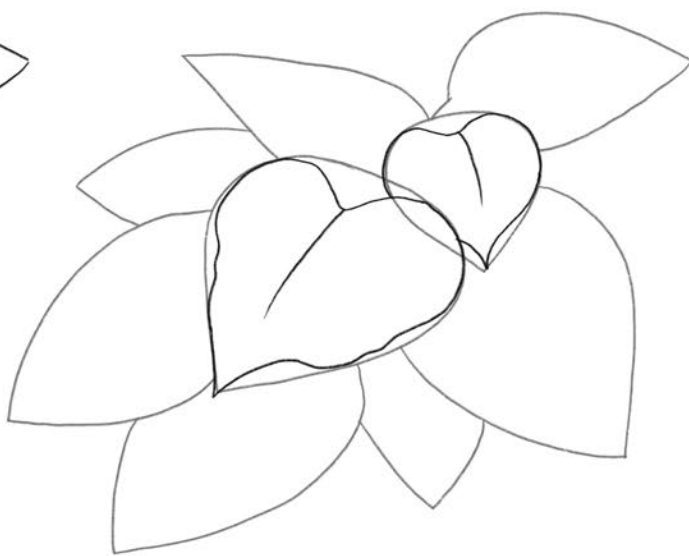
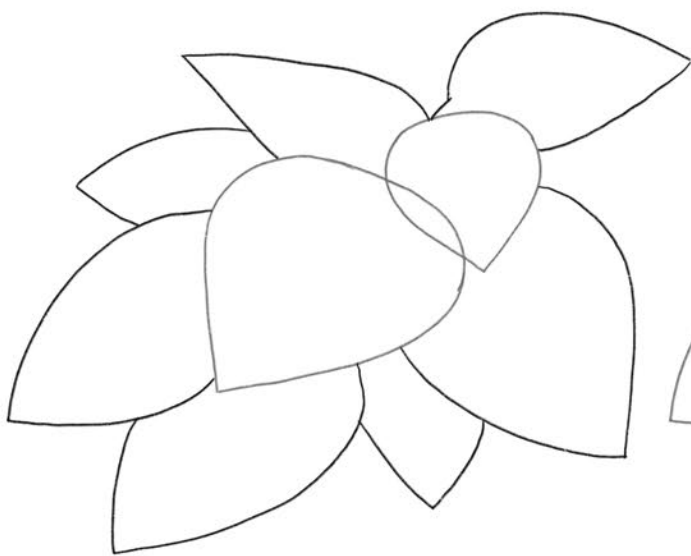
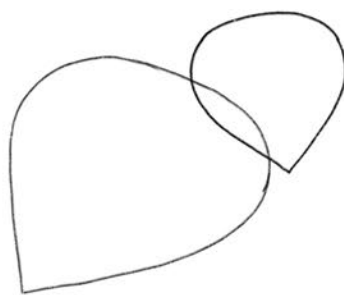
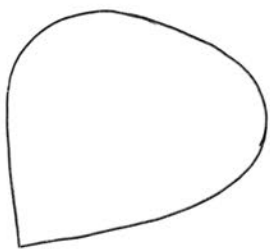




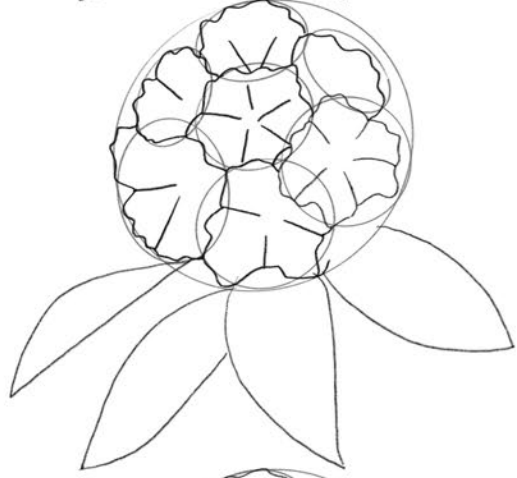
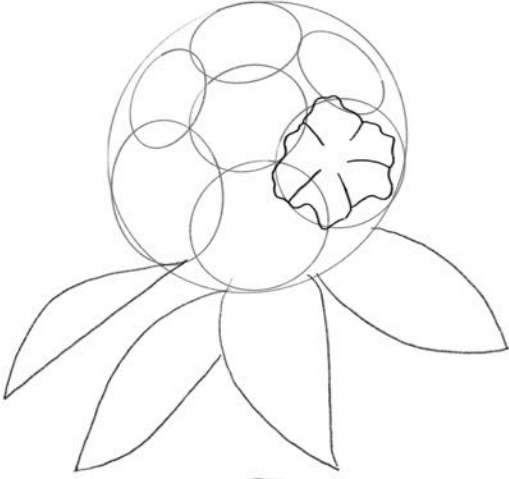
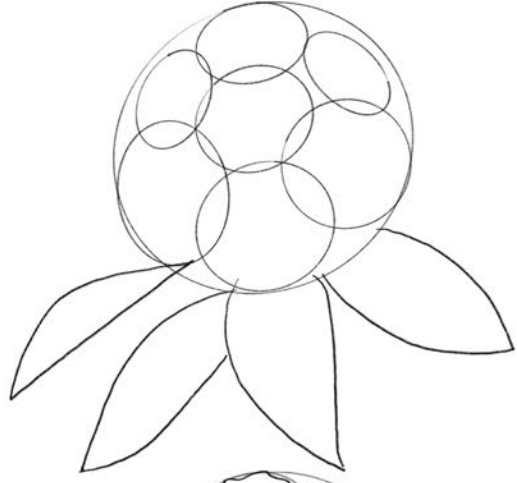
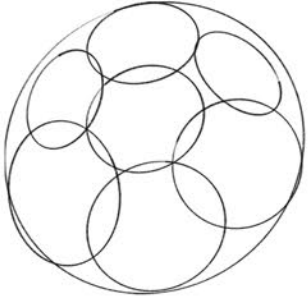


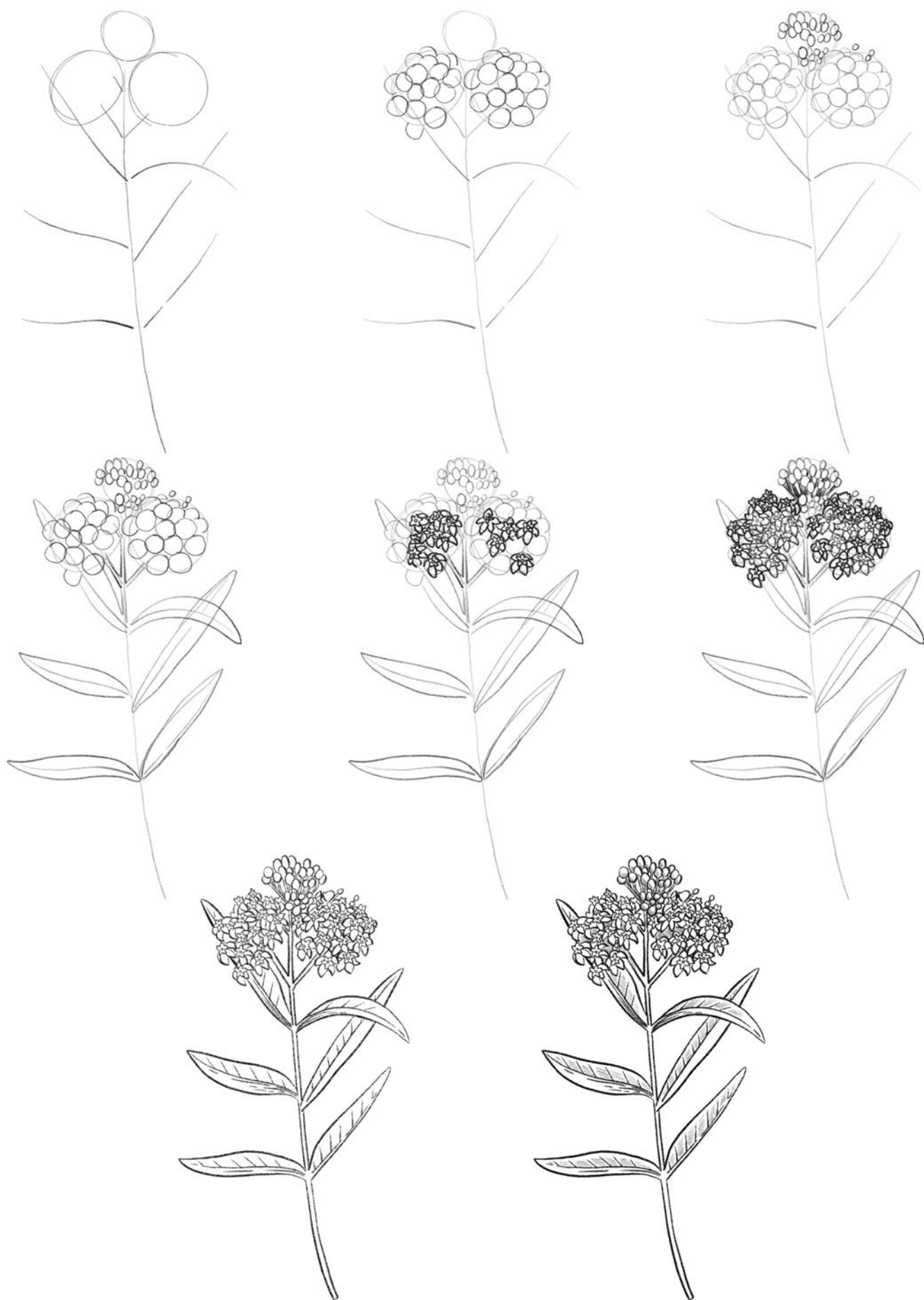


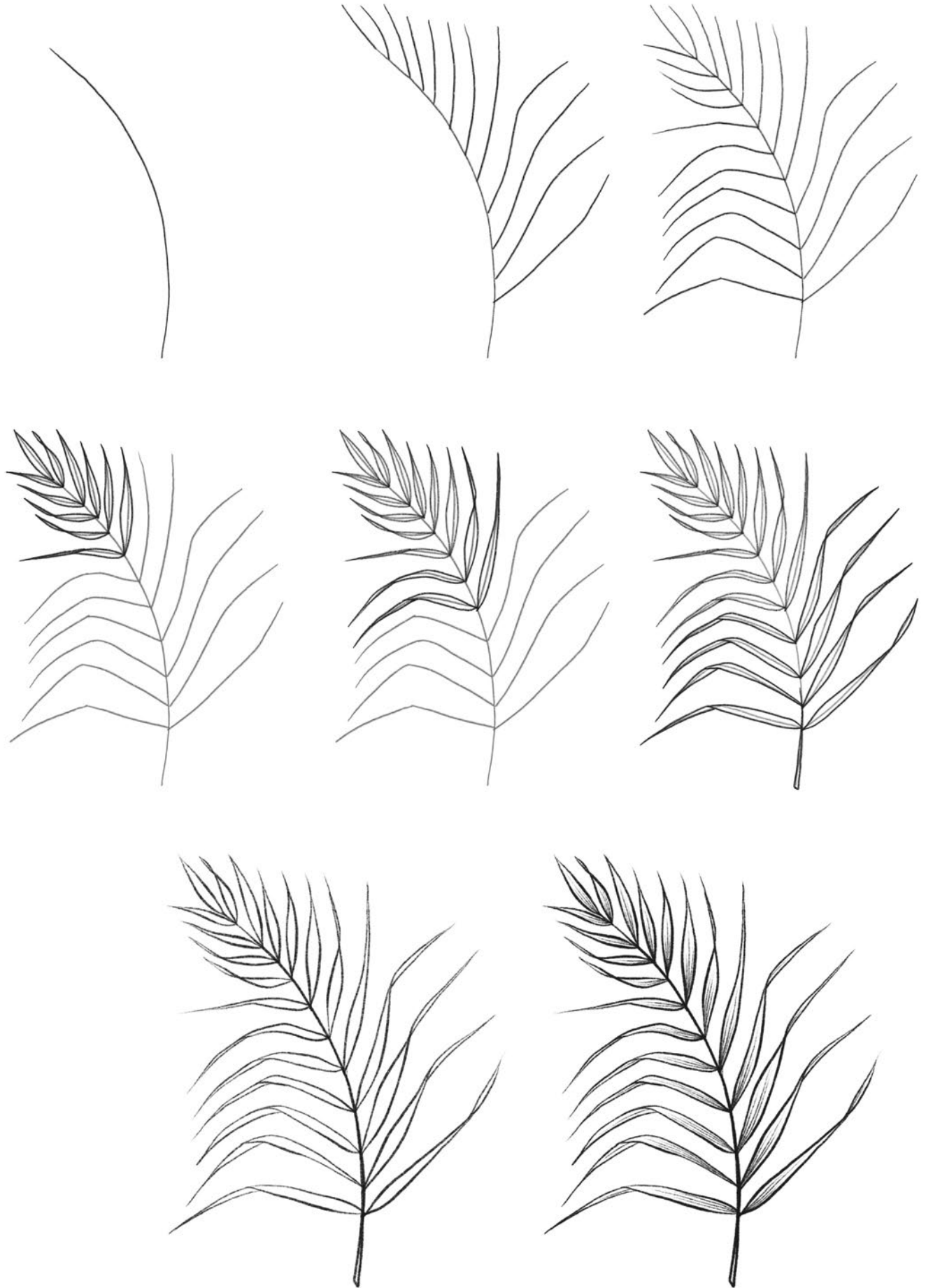




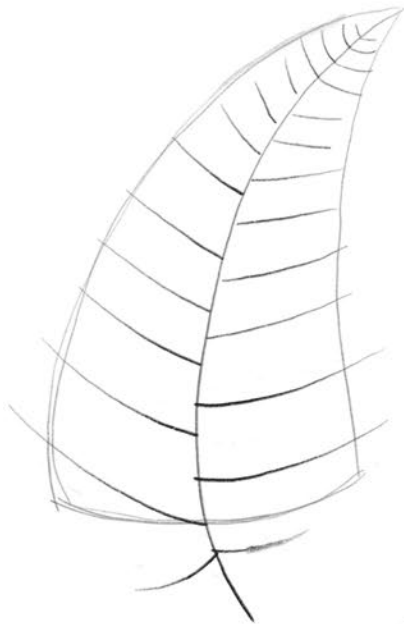
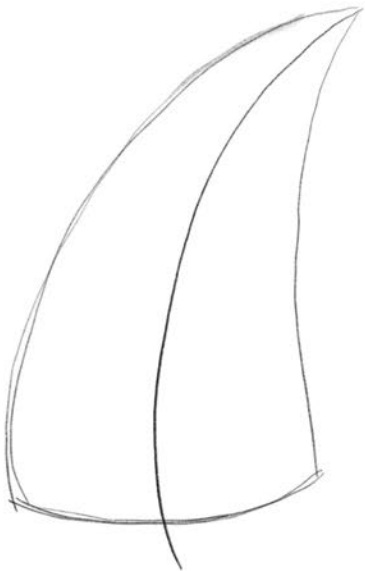
















## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

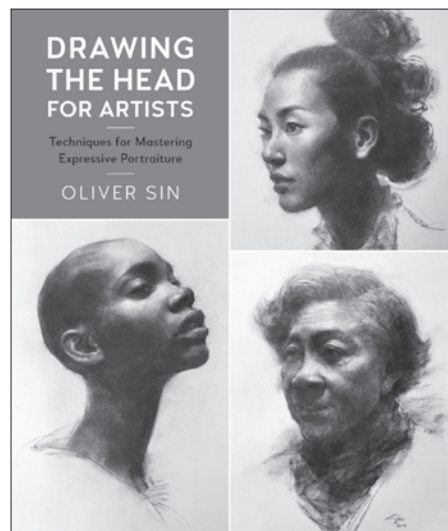
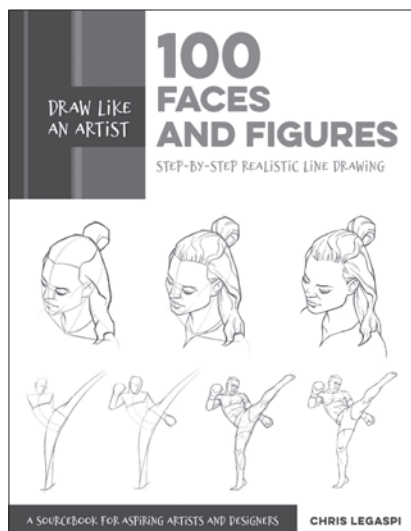
Melissa Washburn is an illustrator and graphic designer living just outside of Chicago in Northwest Indiana. She grew up in the foothills of the Adirondacks but has lived in the Midwest since 1996. Her fascination with things that run, fly, and grow has led to editorial commissions for publications such as *Charlotte Home and Garden*, *Spirituality & Health* magazine, and *Smithsonian* magazine. She continues to exhibit her work throughout Northwest Indiana as well as illustrate and design for advertising, editorial, surface pattern, and package design. Her background includes a bachelor of fine arts in painting and printmaking from Binghamton University, a master's degree in arts administration from Indiana University, coursework at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and experience as art director at advertising firm Group 7even. She was a 2012–2013 recipient of an Individual Artist Program grant from the Indiana Arts Commission. You can see more of her work at [www.melissawashburn.com](http://www.melissawashburn.com).

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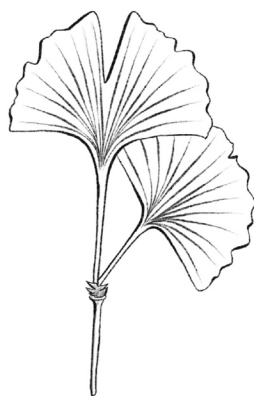
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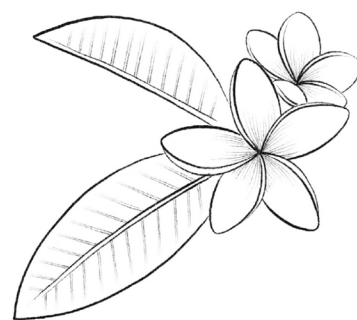


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